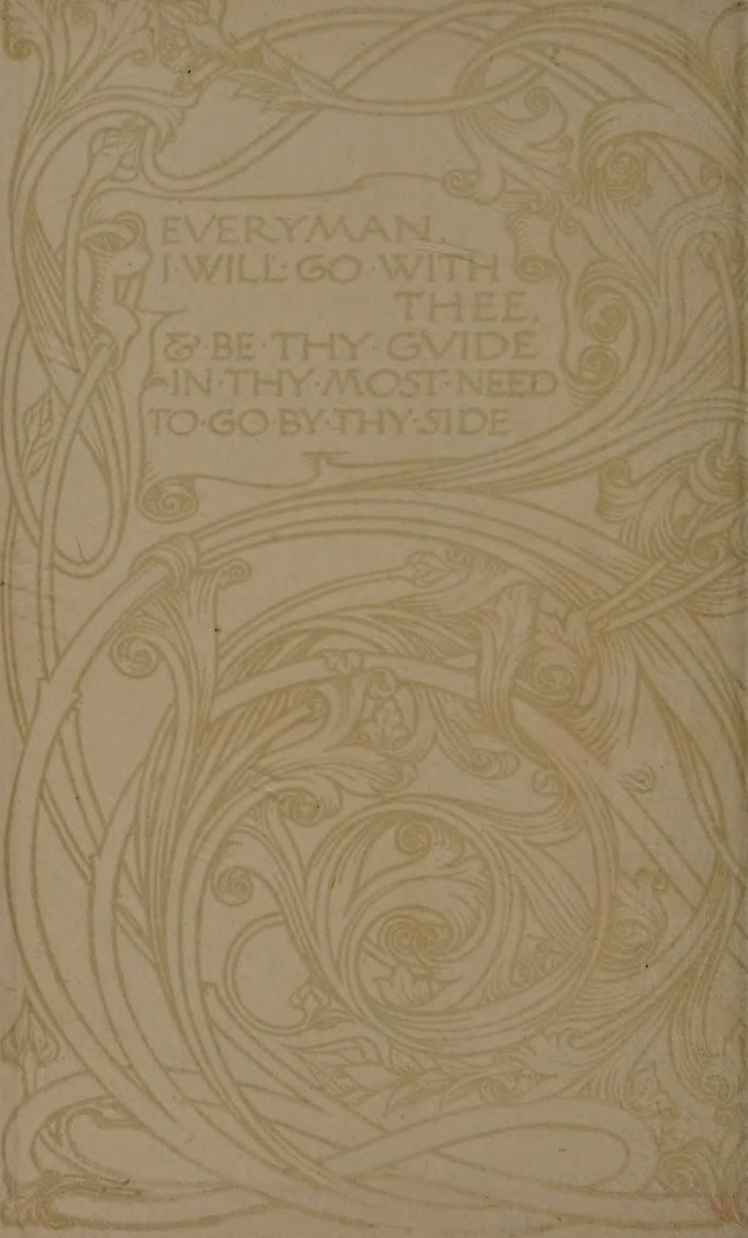

EVERYMAN.
I WILL GO WITH
THEE.
& BE THY GVIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE

EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY
EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS

GREEN'S SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY L. CECIL JANE AND A SURVEY
OF THE PERIOD 1815–1914
BY R. P. FARLEY · VOLUME ONE

THIS IS NO. 727 OF *EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY*. THE PUBLISHERS WILL BE PLEASED TO SEND FREELY TO ALL APPLICANTS A LIST OF THE PUBLISHED AND PROJECTED VOLUMES ARRANGED UNDER THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

TRAVEL ❦ SCIENCE ❦ FICTION
THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY
HISTORY ❦ CLASSICAL
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
ESSAYS ❦ ORATORY
POETRY & DRAMA
BIOGRAPHY
REFERENCE
ROMANCE

THE ORDINARY EDITION IS BOUND IN CLOTH WITH GILT DESIGN AND COLOURED TOP. THERE IS ALSO A LIBRARY EDITION IN REINFORCED CLOTH

LONDON: J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

"CONSIDER HISTORY WITH THE BEGINNINGS OF IT STRETCHING DIMLY INTO THE REMOTE TIME; EMERGING DARKLY OUT OF THE MYSTERIOUS ETERNITY: THE TRUE EPIC POEM AND UNIVERSAL DIVINE SCRIPTURE. . . ."

CARLYLE

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE BY JOHN RICHARD GREEN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME ONE

LONDON & TORONTO
J·M·DENT & SONS
LTD. NEW YORK
E·P·DUTTON & CO

FIRST ISSUE OF THIS EDITION . 1915
REPRINTED 1915, 1920, 1923

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY has often suffered at the hands of its professed exponents. In a measure, it has been almost falsified. It has sometimes been converted into a record of the doings of the great men of this world, of the lives of kings and statesmen and their peers. But if history is anything, it is the record of a nation's life, and a nation is made up rather of its more insignificant members than of its heroes. To know the deeds of a Frederic or of a Napoleon is not to know the history of Prussia or of France during the epochs upon which those conquerors left their impress. That history can be learned only if the feelings and lives of the masses in each country are understood and appreciated.

It is the peculiar merit of J. R. Green that he realised this fact, that he dared to discard the chronological landmarks of his predecessors, and to write a history of the English People, a history of England rather than of English kings. It is his distinction that he grasped the true nature of his subject more fully than the majority of his fellows, and this circumstance alone would suffice to make his work great and enduring. He made no mere addition to the numerous "histories" of England. He wrote what was, and in a measure still is, the only History of England that has been penned by a single man.

But Green's *Short History* is more than a history. It is a literary achievement, written in a style at once vivid and picturesque and simple. No one can read it wholly unmoved, without being thrilled and inspired by its eloquence. It may be added that no one can read it without feeling that after all it is worth while to be born an Englishman, without finding his patriotic sense fired by the wonderful story of this island race.

Defects in the work there are. Of those defects, no one was more acutely conscious than the author. Yet when the whole book is considered it will be found that its faults are akin to merits. Green was an enthusiast, and his errors were the outcome of his temperament. He had read with sympathy the great English master of history, and the *Decline and Fall of the Roman*

Empire taught him, as it has taught many others, to love his subject. That love led him to seize upon the illuminating story: it led him, perhaps, to "confound brilliant hypothesis with sober fact." But the mistakes of the enthusiast are preferable to the mediocre accuracy of the pedant, and Green shines in his lack of pedantry. Critical scholars may find assertions not verified by the available data; they will not find a paragraph which is bathos. And however much it may be criticised, Green's work will remain the most illuminating essay upon English History that has ever been written.

Such a book deserves to be within the reach of all. To bring it within this reach is the purpose of the present edition, which has been reprinted from the first edition of Green's work and does not contain those changes and additions which have been made by his editor in later reprints. It thus contains the words and views of Green as he wrote in the first enthusiasm of realising that he had discovered his life's work. Nothing that he wrote has been altered or omitted, though notes have been added at the end of various sections to indicate points upon which later research necessitates a correction of views and statements in the text. The lists of authorities have also been modernised.

Green ended his book, for all practical purposes, with the battle of Waterloo: his "Epilogue" is not intended to be more than a sketch of the events from that date to 1874. That the book may not be thus incomplete, Mr. R. P. Farley has written an Appendix, carrying on the story to the present day. In accordance with the scheme of the whole work, he has insisted upon the social side of the period, tracing with ability and clarity the development of the English people from the close of the "Great War" to the outbreak of a still greater conflict.

L. CECIL JANE.

71, HIGH STREET, OXFORD,
October 1915.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Oxford during the Last Century, 1859; A Short History of the English People, 1874 (this work was issued in a larger and fuller form in 4 vols., 1877–80); new edition revised by Mrs. Green, 1888; another edition with analysis by C. W. A. Tait, revised with introduction by Alice S. Green, 4 parts, 1888–90; illustrated edition, 4 vols., 1892–94; Eversley edition, 1895–96; edition edited by Mrs. Green and Miss Kate Norgate, 1907; Stray Studies from England and Italy, 1876; A Short Geography of the British Islands (with Alice Stopford), 1879; The Making of England, 1881; The Conquest of England, edited by Mrs. Alice Stopford Green, 1883; Letters edited by Leslie Stephen, 1901; Oxford Studies edited by Mrs. Green and Miss K. Norgate, 1901; Historical Studies edited by Alice Stopford Green, 1903; Studies in Oxford History, chiefly in the Eighteenth Century, A series of papers by the Rev. J. R. Green and the Rev. G. Roberson, edited by C. L. Stainer, 1901.

Works Edited by J. R. Green.—History Primers, 1875, etc., consisting of Classical Antiquities by A. S. Wilkins; Classical Geography by F. Tozer; Europe by E. A. Freeman; France by C. M. Yonge; Greece by C. A. Fyffe; Rome by M. Creighton; Literature Primers, 6 vols., 1875; Readings from English History, selected and edited, 1879; Classical Writers, a series of critical biographies, 7 vols., 1879–82, consisting of Demosthenes by S. H. Butcher; Euripides by J. P. Mahaffy; Livy by W. W. Capes; Milton by S. A. Brooke; Sophocles by L. Campbell; Tacitus by A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb; Virgil by H. Nettleship; Addison's Essays, chosen and edited, 1880.

PREFACE

THE aim of the following work is defined by its title; it is a history, not of English Kings or English Conquests, but of the English People. At the risk of sacrificing much that was interesting and attractive in itself, and which the constant usage of our historians has made familiar to English readers, I have preferred to pass lightly and briefly over the details of foreign wars and diplomacies, the personal adventures of kings and nobles, the pomp of courts, or the intrigues of favourites, and to dwell at length on the incidents of that constitutional, intellectual, and social advance in which we read the history of the nation itself. It is with this purpose that I have devoted more space to Chaucer than to Cressy, to Caxton than to the petty strife of Yorkist and Lancastrian, to the Poor Law of Elizabeth than to her victory at Cadiz, to the Methodist revival than to the escape of the Young Pretender.

Whatever the worth of the present work may be, I have striven throughout that it should never sink into a "drum and trumpet history." It is the reproach of historians that they have too often turned history into a mere record of the butchery of men by their fellow-men. But war plays a small part in the real story of European nations, and in that of England its part is smaller than in any. The only war which has profoundly affected English society and English government is the Hundred Years' War with France, and of that war the results were simply evil. If I have said little of the glories of Cressy, it is because I have dwelt much on the wrong and misery which prompted the verse of Longland and the preaching of Ball. But on the other hand, I have never shrunk from telling at length the triumphs of peace. I have restored to their place among the achievements of Englishmen the "Faerie Queen" and the "Novum Organum." I have set Shakspere among the heroes of the Elizabethan age, and placed the scientific inquiries of the Royal Society side by side with the victories of the New Model. If some of the conventional figures of military and political history occupy in my pages less than the space usually given them, it is because I have had to find a place for figures little heeded in common history —the figures of the missionary, the poet, the printer, the merchant, or the philosopher.

In England, more than elsewhere, constitutional progress has been the result of social development. In a brief summary of our history such as the present, it was impossible to dwell as I could have wished to dwell on every phase of this development; but I have endeavoured to point out, at great crises, such as those of

the Peasant Revolt or the rise of the New Monarchy, how much of our political history is the outcome of social changes; and throughout I have drawn greater attention to the religious, intellectual, and industrial progress of the nation itself than has, so far as I remember, ever been done in any previous history of the same extent.

The scale of the present work has hindered me from giving in detail the authorities for every statement. But I have prefixed to each section a short critical account of the chief contemporary authorities for the period it represents as well as of the most useful modern works in which it can be studied. As I am writing for English readers of a general class I have thought it better to restrict myself in the latter case to English books, or to English translations of foreign works where they exist. This is a rule which I have only broken in the occasional mention of French books, such as those of Guizot or Mignet, well known and within reach of ordinary students. I greatly regret that the publication of the first volume of the invaluable Constitutional History of Professor Stubbs came too late for me to use it in my account of those early periods on which it has thrown so great a light.

I am only too conscious of the faults and oversights in a work, much of which has been written in hours of weakness and ill health. That its imperfections are not greater than they are, I owe to the kindness of those who have from time to time aided me with suggestions and corrections; and especially to my dear friend Mr. E. A. Freeman, who has never tired of helping me with counsel and criticism. Thanks for like friendly help are due to Professor Stubbs and Professor Bryce, and in literary matters to the Rev. Stopford Brooke, whose wide knowledge and refined taste have been of the greatest service to me. I am indebted to the kindness of Miss Thompson for permission to use the Genealogical Tables prefixed to my work, and to Mr. Freeman for a like permission to use some of the maps in his "Old English History."

The Chronological Annals which precede the text will, I trust, be useful in the study of those periods where the course of my story has compelled me to neglect the strict chronological order of succession. In using this book as a school book, both teacher and scholar would do well to study them side by side with the text.

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHRONOLOGICAL ANNALS xvii
GENEALOGICAL TABLES xxix

CHAPTER I

THE ENGLISH KINGDOMS, 607—1013

SECT.
1.—Britain and the English 1
2.—The English Conquest, 449—607 7
3.—The Northumbrian Overlordship, 607—685 . . . 16
4.—The Overlordship of Mercia, 685—823 33
5.—Wessex and the Danes, 800—880 41
6.—The West-Saxon Kingdom, 892—1016 48

CHAPTER II

ENGLAND UNDER FOREIGN KINGS, 1013—1204

1.—The Danish Kings 57
2.—The English Restoration, 1042—1066 61
3.—Normandy and the Normans, 912—1066 65
4.—The Conqueror, 1042—1066 68
5.—The Norman Conquest, 1068—1071 75
6.—The English Revival, 1071—1127 81
7.—England and Anjou, 870—1154 91
8.—Henry the Second, 1154—1189 97
9.—The fall of the Angevins, 1189—1204 105

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT CHARTER, 1204—1265

1.—English Literature under the Norman and Angevin Kings . 109
2.—John, 1204—1215 114
3.—The Great Charter, 1215—1217 119
4.—The Universities 123
5.—Henry the Third, 1217—1257 132
6.—The Friars 138
7.—The Barons' War, 1258—1265 142

CHAPTER IV

THE THREE EDWARDS, 1265—1360

1.—The Conquest of Wales, 1265—1284. 150
2.—The English Parliament, 1283—1295 158
3.—The Conquest of Scotland, 1290—1305 169
4.—The English Town 181
5.—The King and the Baronage, 1290—1327 188
6.—The Scotch War of Independence, 1306—1342 . . . 197

CHAPTER V

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR, 1336—1431

SECT.		PAGE
1.—Edward the Third, 1336—1360		204
2.—The Good Parliament, 1360—1377		217
3.—John Wyclif		221
4.—The Peasant Revolt, 1377—1381		230
5.—Richard the Second, 1381—1399		239
6.—The House of Lancaster, 1399—1422		249

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW MONARCHY, 1422—1540

1.—Joan of Arc, 1422—1451	256
2.—The Wars of the Roses, 1450—1471	265
3.—The New Monarchy, 1471—1509	272
4.—The New Learning, 1509—1520	286
5.—Wolsey, 1515—1531	303
6.—Thomas Cromwell, 1530—1540	313

CHAPTER VII

THE REFORMATION

1.—The Protestants, 1540—1553	328
2.—The Martyrs, 1553—1558	340
3.—Elizabeth, 1558—1560	349
4.—England and Mary Stuart, 1560—1572	361
5.—The England of Elizabeth	370
6.—The Armada, 1572—1588	383
7.—The Elizabethan Poets	397
8.—The Conquest of Ireland, 1588—1610	414

CHAPTER VIII

PURITAN ENGLAND

1.—The Puritans, 1583—1603	431
2.—The First of the Stuarts, 1604—1623	444
3.—The King and the Parliament, 1623—1629	461
4.—New England	472
5.—The Tyranny, 1629—1640	482
6.—The Long Parliament, 1640—1644	500
7.—The Civil War, July 1642—August 1646	512
8.—The Army and the Parliament, 1646—1649	523
9.—The Commonwealth, 1649—1653	535
10.—The Fall of Puritanism, 1653—1660	545

CHAPTER IX

THE REVOLUTION

SECT.		PAGE
1.	England and the Revolution	567
2.	The Restoration, 1660—1667	583
3.	Charles the Second, 1667—1673	595
4.	Danby, 1673—1678	606
5.	Shaftesbury, 1679—1682	616
6.	The Second Stuart Tyranny, 1682—1688	624
7.	William of Orange	634
8.	The Grand Alliance, 1689—1694	645
9.	Marlborough, 1698—1712	661
10.	Walpole, 1712—1742	677

CHAPTER X

MODERN ENGLAND

1.	William Pitt, 1742—1762	692
2.	The Independence of America, 1761—1785	712
3.	The Second Pitt, 1783—1789	736
4.	The War with France, 1793—1815	756
	Epilogue, 1815—1873	784

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SURVEY, FROM 1815–1914

CHAPTER I

FROM WATERLOO TO THE REFORM BILL, 1815—1832

1.	Agrarian and Industrial Revolutions	792
2.	Agitation among Working Classes	796
3.	Foreign Policy and Free Trade	799
4.	The Demand for Parliamentary Reform	801

CHAPTER II

FROM THE REFORM BILL TO THE EDUCATION ACT OF 1870, 1832—1870

1.	The Reformed Parliament and Reforms	804
2.	Queen Victoria, 1837—1901	808
3.	Crimean War, 1854—1856	814
4.	Indian Mutiny	815
5.	Political and Industrial Status of the Working Classes	817

CHAPTER III

FROM THE EDUCATION ACT (1870) TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE EUROPEAN WAR, 1870—1914

1.	Land, Education, Army Reform	820
2.	The Near East	826
3.	Ireland	829
4.	Local Government and Social Legislation	832
5.	South African War	835
6.	The New Liberalism	836

LIST OF MAPS

England	*facing p.*	1
Britain in the Midst of the English Conquest	,,	10
England in the Ninth Century	,,	42
The Dominions of the Angevins	,,	98
France at the Treaty of Bretigny (Calais)	,,	204
The American Colonies in 1640	,,	474
The World showing British Possessions in 1814 and 1914	,,	838

CHRONOLOGICAL ANNALS OF ENGLISH HISTORY

THE ENGLISH KINGDOMS

449—1016

449 English land in Britain.
457 Kent conquered by English.
477 Landing of South Saxons.
495 Landing of West Saxons.
520 British victory at Mount Badon.
547 Ida founds Kingdom of Bernicia.
552 West Saxons take Old Sarum.
565 Æthelberht, King of Kent, died 616.
568 —— driven back by West Saxons.
571 West Saxons march into Mid-Britain.
577 —— conquer at Deorham.
593 Æthelfrith creates Kingdom of Northumbria, died 617.
597 West Saxons defeated at Fethanlea.
Augustine converts Kent.
603 Battle of Dægsastan.
607 Battle of Chester.
617 Eadwine, King of Northumbria, died 633.
626 —— overlord of Britain.
627 —— becomes Christian.
633 —— slain at Hatfield.
634 Oswald, King of Northumbria, died 642.
—— defeats Welsh at Hevenfeld.
636 *Aidan settles at Holy Island.*
639 Conversion of Wessex.
642 Oswald slain at Maserfeld.
655 Oswi, King of Northumbria, died 670.
—— Victory at Winwœd.
657 Wulfere King in Mercia.
658 West Saxons conquer as far as the Parret.
664 Council of Whitby.
Cædmon at Whitby.
668 Theodore made Archbishop of Canterbury.
670 Egfrith, King of Northumbria, died 685.
676 Wulfere drives West Saxons over Thames.
681 Wilfrid converts South Saxons.
682 Centwine of Wessex conquers Mid-Somerset.
685 Egfrith defeated and slain at Nechtansmere.
688 Ini, King of West Saxons, died 726.
714 Ini defeats Ceolred of Mercia at Wodnesborough.
716 Æthelbald, King of Mercia, died 755.
733 Mercian conquest of Wessex.
735 *Death of Bæda.*
752 Wessex recovers freedom in battle of Burford.
755 *Death of Boniface.*
756 Eadberht of Northumbria takes Alcluyd.
757 Offa, King of Mercia, died 795.
773 —— subdues Kentish men at Otford.
777 —— defeats West Saxons at Bensington.
784 —— places Brihtric on throne of Wessex.
786 —— creates Archbishopric at Lichfield.
787 First landing of Danes in England.
796 Cenwulf, King of Mercia, died 819.
—— suppresses Archbishopric of Lichfield.
800 Ecgberht, becomes King in Wessex, died 836.
808 Charles the Great restores Eardwulf in Northumbria.
813 Ecgberht subdues the West Welsh to the Tamar.
822 Civil war in Mercia.
823 Ecgberht defeats Mercians at Ellandune.
Ecgberht overlord of England south of Thames.
824 Revolt of East Anglia against Mercia.
825 Defeat of Mercians by East Anglians.
827 Mercia and Northumbria submit to Ecgberht.
Ecgberht overlord of all English kingdoms.
828 —— invades Wales.
835 —— defeats Danes at Hengestesdun.
838 Æthelwulf, King of Wessex, died 858.
849 Ælfred born.
851 Danes defeated at Aclea.
853 Ælfred sent to Rome.
855 Æthelwulf goes to Rome.
858 Æthelbald, King of Wessex, died 860.
860 Æthelberht, King of Wessex, died 866.
866 Æthelred, King of Wessex, died 871.

867 Danes conquer Northumbria.
868 Peace of Nottingham with Danes.
870 Danes conquer and settle in East Anglia.
871 Danes invade Wessex.
Ælfred, King of Wessex, died 901.
874 Danes conquer Mercia.
876 Danes settle in Northumbria.
877 Ælfred defeats Danes at Exeter.
878 Danes overrun Wessex.
Ælfred victor at Edington.
Peace of Wedmore.
883 Ælfred sends envoys to Rome and India.
886 —— takes and refortifies London.
893 Danes reappear in Thames and Kent.
894 Ælfred drives Hasting from Wessex.
895 Hasting invades Mercia.
896 Ælfred drives Danes from Essex.
897 Hasting quits England.
Ælfred creates a fleet.
901 Eadward the Elder, died 925.
912 Northmen settle in Normandy.
913–918 Æthelflæd conquers Danish Mercia.
921 Eadward subdues East Anglia and Essex.
924 —— owned as overlord by Northumbria, Scots, and Strathclyde.
925 Æthelstan, died 940.
926 Æthelstan drives Welsh from Exeter.
934 —— invades Scotland.
937 Victory of Brunanburh.
940 Eadmund, died 947.
943 Dunstan made Abbot of Glastonbury.
945 Cumberland granted to Malcolm, King of Scots.
947 Eadred, died 955.
954 —— makes Northumbria an Earldom.
955 Eadwig, died 958.
956 Banishment of Dunstan.
957 Revolt of Mercia under Eadgar.
958 Eadgar, died 975.
961 Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury.
975 Eadward the Martyr, died 979.
979 Æthelred the Unready, died 1016.
980 Mercia and Northumbria part from Wessex.
987–1040 Fulc the Black, Count of Anjou.
994 Invasion of Swegen.
1002 Massacre of Danes.
1003 Swegen harries Wessex.
1012 Murder of Archbishop Ælfheah.
1013 All England submits to Swegen.
1014 Flight of Æthelred to Normandy.
1016 Eadmund Ironside, King, and dies.

ENGLAND UNDER FOREIGN KINGS

1017—1204

1017 Cnut, King, died 1035.
1020 Godwine made Earl of Wessex.
1027 Cnut goes to Rome.
Birth of William of Normandy.
1035 Harold and Harthacnut divide England.
1037 Harold, King, died 1040.
1040 Harthacnut, King, died 1042.
1042 Eadward the Confessor, died 1066.
1044–1060 Geoffrey Martel, Count of Anjou.
1045 *Lanfranc at Bec.*
1047 Victory of William at Val-ès-dunes.
1051 Banishment of Godwine.
1052 William of Normandy visits England.
Return and death of Godwine.
1053 Harold made Earl of West-Saxons.
1054 William's victory at Mortemer.
1055 Harold's first campaign in Wales.
1054–1060 Norman conquest of southern Italy.
1058 William's victory at the Dive.
1060 Normans invade Sicily.
1063 Harold conquers Wales.
1066 Harold, King.
—— conquers at Stamford Bridge.
—— defeated at Senlac or Hastings.
William of Normandy, King, died 1087.
1068–1071 Norman Conquest of England.
1070 Reorganization of the Church.
1075 Rising of Roger Fitz-Osbern.
1081 William invades Wales.
1085 Failure of Danish invasion.
1086 Completion of Domesday Book.
1087 William the Red, died 1100.
1093 *Anselm, Archbishop.*
1094 Revolt of Wales against the Norman Marchers.
1095 Revolt of Robert de Mowbray.
1096 Normandy left in pledge to William.
1097 William invades Wales.
Anselm leaves England.
1098 War with France.
1100 Henry the First, died 1135.
Henry's Charter.
1101 Robert of Normandy invades England.
1106 Settlement of question of investitures.
English Conquest of Normandy.
1109–1129 Fulc of Jerusalem, Count of Anjou.
1108 War with France.
1111 War with Anjou.
1113 Peace with Gisors.
1114 Marriage of Matilda with Henry V.
1118 Revolt of Norman baronage.
1120 Wreck of White Ship.
1122 Henry's campaign in Wales.
1124 France and Anjou support William Clito.

1127 Matilda married to Geoffry of Anjou.
1128 Death of the Clito in Flanders.
1134 Revolt of Wales.
1135 Stephen of Blois, died 1154.
1137 Normandy repulses the Angevins.
1138 Revolt of Earl Robert.
Battle of the Standard.
Seizure of the Bishops.
1141 Battle of Lincoln.
1147 Matilda withdraws to Normandy.
1148 Henry of Anjou in England.
Archbishop Theobald driven into exile.
1151 Henry becomes Duke of Normandy.
1152 Henry marries Eleanor of Guienne.
1153 Henry in England. Treaty of Wallingford.
1154 Henry the Second, died 1189.
1159 Expedition against Toulouse.
The Great Scutage.
1162 Thomas made Archbishop of Canterbury.
1164 Constitutions of Clarendon.
1164 Flight of Archbishop Thomas.
1166 Assize of Clarendon.
1169 Strongbow's invasion of Ireland.
1170 Death of Archbishop Thomas.
1173 } Inquest of Sheriffs.
1174 } Rebellion of Henry's sons.
1176 Assize of Northampton.
1178 Reorganization of Curia Regis.
1181 Assize of Arms.
1189 Revolt of Richard.
1190 } Richard the First, died 1199.
1194 } Richard's Crusade.
1194 } War with Philip Augustus.
1196 }
1195 } Llewelyn Ap-Jorwerth in North
1246 } Wales.
1197 Richard builds Château Gaillard.
1199 John, dies 1216.
1200 —— recovers Anjou and Maine.
Layamon writes the Brut.
1203 Murder of Arthur.
1204 French conquest of Anjou and Normandy.

THE GREAT CHARTER

1204—1295

1205 Barons refuse to fight for recovery of Normandy.
1208 Innocent III. puts England under Interdict.
1211 John reduces Llewellyn-ap-Jorwerth to submission.
1210 John divides Irish Pale into counties.
1213 John becomes the Pope's vassal.
1214 Battle of Bouvines.
Birth of Roger Bacon.
1215 The Great Charter.
1216 Lewis of France called in by the Barons.
Henry the Third, died 1272.
Confirmation of the Charter.
1217 Lewis returns to France.
Hubert de Burgh, Justiciary.
1218 Charter again confirmed.
1221 *Friars land in England.*
1223 Charter again confirmed at London.
1224 Fresh confirmation of Charter.
Revolt of Faukes de Breauté.
Stephen Langton's death.
1229 Papal exactions.
1230 Failure of Henry's campaign in Poitou.
1231 Conspiracy against the Italian clergy.
1232 Fall of Hubert de Burgh.
1237 Charter again confirmed.
1238 Earl Simon of Leicester marries Henry's sister.
1242 Defeat of Henry at Taillebourg.
Barons refuse subsidies.
1246 } Llewelyn-ap-Gryffyth, Prince in
1283 } North Wales.
1248 Irish refusal of subsidies.
Earl Simon in Gascony.
1253 Earl Simon returns to England.
1258 Provisions of Oxford.
1261 Earl Simon leaves England.
1264 Mise of Amiens.
Battle of Lewes.
1265 Commons summoned to Parliament.
Battle of Evesham.
1267 *Roger Bacon writes his "Opus Majus."*
1268 Llewellyn-ap-Gryffyth owned as Prince of Wales.
1270 Edward goes on Crusade.
1272 Edward the First, died 1307.
1277 Edward reduces Llewellyn-ap-Gryffyth to submission.
1279 Statute of Mortmain.
1282 Conquest of Wales.
1283 Statute of Merchants.
1285 Statute of Winchester.
1290 Statute "Quia Emptores."
Expulsion of the Jews.
Marriage Treaty of Brigham.
1291 Parliament of Norham settles Scotch succession.
1293 Edward claims appeals from Scotland.
1294 Seizure of Guienne by Philip of France.
1295 French fleet attacks Dover.
Final organization of the English Parliament.

THE WAR WITH SCOTLAND AND FRANCE

1296—1485

1296 Edward conquers Scotland.
1297 Victory of Wallace at Stirling.
Outlawry of the Clergy.
Barons refuse to serve in Flanders.
1298 Edward forced to renounce illegal taxation.
Edward conquers Scots at Falkirk.
Peace with France.
1301 Barons demand nomination of Ministers by Parliament.
1302 Barons exact fresh Confirmation of the Charters.
1304 Final submission of Scotland.
1305 Parliament of Perth.
1306 Rising of Robert Bruce.
1307 Parliament of Carlisle. First Statute of Provisors.
Edward the Second, died 1327.
1308 Gaveston exiled.
1310 The Lords Ordainers draw up Articles of Reform.
1312 Death of Gaveston.
1314 Battle of Bannockburn.
1316 Battle of Athenry.
1318 Edward accepts the Ordinances.
1322 Death of Earl of Lancaster. Ordinances annulled.
1323 Truce with the Scots.
1324 French attack Aquitaine.
1325 The Queen and Prince Edward in France.
1326 Queen lands in England.
1327 Deposition of Edward II.
Edward the Third, died 1377.
1328 Treaty of Northampton recognizes independence of Scotland.
1329 Death of Robert Bruce.
1330 Death of Roger Mortimer.
1332 Edward Balliol invades Scotland.
1333 Battle of Halidon Hill.
Balliol does homage to Edward.
1334 Balliol driven from Scotland.
1335 Edward invades Scotland.
1336
1336 France again declares war.
1337 War with France and Scotland.
1338
Edward claims crown of France.
1339 Edward attacks France from Brabant.
1340 Battle of Sluys.
1343 War in Brittany and Guienne.
1346 Battles of Cressy and Neville's Cross.
1347 Capture of Calais.
Truce with France.
1349 First appearance of the Black Death.
1351 Statutes of Labourers.
1353
1353 First Statute of Præmunire.
1354 Renewal of French war.
1356 Battle of Poitiers.
1360 Treaty of Bretigny.
1367 The Black Prince victorious at Najara.
Statute of Kilkenny.
1368 Renewal of French war.
Wyclif's treatise "De Dominio."
1370 Storm of Limoges.
1372 Victory of Spanish fleet off Rochelle.
1374 Revolt of Aquitaine.
1376 The Good Parliament.
1377 Its work undone by the Duke of Lancaster.
Wyclif before the Bishop of London.
Richard the Second, died 1399.
1378 Gregory XI. denounces Wyclif's heresy.
1380 *Longland's "Piers the Ploughman."*
1381 Wyclif's declaration against Transubstantiation.
The Peasant Revolt.
1382 Condemnation of Wyclif at Blackfriars.
Suppression of the Poor Preachers.
1384 Death of Wyclif.
1387 Barons force Richard to dismiss the Earl of Suffolk.
1389 Truce with France.
1394 Richard in Ireland.
1396 Richard marries Isabella of France.
Truce with, prolonged.
1397 Murder of the Duke of Gloucester.
1398 Richard's plans of tyranny.
1399 Deposition of Richard.
Henry the Fourth, died 1413.
1400 Revolt of Owen Glendower in Wales.
1401 Statute of Heretics.
1402 Battle of Homildon Hill.
1403 Revolt of the Percies.
1404 French descents on England.
1405 Revolt of Archbishop Scrope.
1407 French attack Gascony.
1411 English force sent to aid Duke of Burgundy in France.
1413 Henry the Fifth, died 1422.
1414 Lollard Conspiracy.
1415 Battle of Agincourt.
1417 Henry invades Normandy.
1419 Alliance with Duke of Burgundy.
1420 Treaty of Troyes.
1422 Henry the Sixth, died 1471.
1424 Battle of Verneuil.
1429 Siege of Orleans.
1430 County Suffrage restricted.
1431 Death of Joan of Arc.
1435 Congress of Arras.
1445 Marriage of Margaret of Anjou.
1447 Death of Duke of Gloucester.
1450 Impeachment and death of Duke of Suffolk.
Cade's Insurrection.
1451 Loss of Normandy and Guienne.
1454 Duke of York named Protector.

1455 First battle of S. Albans.
1456 End of York's Protectorate.
1459 Failure of Yorkist revolt.
1460 Battle of Northampton.
York acknowledged as successor.
Battle of Wakefield.
1461 Second battle of S. Albans.
Battle of Mortimer's Cross.
Edward the Fourth, died 1484.
Battle of Towton.
1464 Edward marries Lady Grey.
1470 Warwick driven to France.
Flight of Edward to Burgundy.
1471 Battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury.
1475 Edward invades France.
1476 *Caxton settles in England.*
1483 Murder of Edward the Fifth.
Richard the Third, died 1485.
Buckingham's insurrection.
1485 Battle of Bosworth.

THE TUDORS

1485—1603

1485 Henry the Seventh, died 1509.
1487 Conspiracy of Lambert Simnel.
1490 Treaty with Ferdinand and Isabella.
1491 Henry invades France.
1496 Cornish rebellion.
1497 Perkin Warbeck captured.
1497 Sebastian Cabot lands in America.
1499 *Colet and Erasmus at Oxford.*
1501 Arthur Tudor marries Catherine of Arragon.
1502 Margaret Tudor marries James the Fourth.
1505 *Colet Dean of S. Paul's.*
1509 Henry the Eighth, died 1547.
Erasmus writes the "Praise of Folly."
1512 War with France.
1513 Battles of the Spurs and of Flodden
Wolsey becomes chief Minister.
1516 *More's "Utopia."*
1517 Luther denounces Indulgences.
1519 Field of Cloth of Gold.
1520 Luther burns the Pope's Bull.
1521 Quarrel of Luther with Henry the Eighth.
1522 Renewal of French war.
1523 Wolsey quarrels with the Commons.
1525 Exaction of Benevolences defeated.
1525 Peace with France. *Tyndal translates the Bible.*
1527 Henry resolves on a Divorce. Persecution of Protestants.
1529 Fall of Wolsey. Ministry of Norfolk and More.
1531 King acknowledged as "Supreme Head of the Church of England."
1533 Statute of Appeals.
1534 Acts of Supremacy and Succession.
1535 Cromwell Vicar-General. *Death of More.*
Overthrow of the Geraldines in Ireland.
1536 English Bible issued.
Dissolution of lesser Monasteries.
Pilgrimage of Grace.
1539 Execution of Lord Exeter.
Law of Six Articles.
Suppression of greater Abbeys.
1542 Completion of the Tudor Conquest of Ireland.
1543 War with France.
1547 Execution of Earl of Surrey.
Edward the Sixth, died 1553.
Battle of Pinkie Cleugh.
1548 English Book of Common Prayer.
1549 Western Rebellion. End of Somerset's Protectorate.
1552 Death of Somerset.
Suppression of Chantries.
1553 Mary, died 1559.
Chancellor discovers Archangel.
1554 Mary marries Philip of Spain.
England absolved by Cardinal Pole.
1555 Persecution of Protestants begins.
1556 Burning of Archbishop Cranmer.
1557 War with France.
1558 Loss of Calais.
1559 Elizabeth, died 1603.
—— restores Royal Supremacy and English Prayer Book.
1560 War in Scotland.
1561 Mary Stuart lands in Scotland.
1562 Rebellion of Shane O'Neill in Ulster.
Elizabeth supports French Huguenots.
1563 First penal statute against Catholics.
Hawkins begins Slave Trade with Africa.
English driven out of Havre.
Thirty-nine Articles imposed on clergy.
1565 Mary marries Darnley.
1566 Darnley murders Rizzio.
Royal Exchange built.
1567 Bothwell murders Darnley.
Defeat and death of Shane O'Neill.
1568 Mary flies to England.
1569 Revolt of the northern Earls.
1570 Bull of Deposition issued.
1572 Conspiracy and death of Norfolk.
Rising of the Low Countries against Alva.
Cartwright's "Admonition to the Parliament."
1575 Queen refuses Netherlands.
1576 *First public Theatre in Blackfriars.*
1577 Landing of the Seminary Priests.
Drake sets sail for the Pacific.
1579 *Lyly's "Euphues."*
Spenser publishes "Shepherd's Calendar."

1580 Campian and Parsons in England.
Revolt of the Desmonds. Massacre of Smerwick.
1583 Plots to assassinate Elizabeth.
New powers given to Ecclesiastical Commission.
1584 Murder of Prince of Orange.
Armada gathers in the Tagus.
Colonization of Virginia.
1585 English army sent to Netherlands.
Drake on the Spanish Coast.
1586 Battle of Zutphen.
Babington's Plot.
Shakspere in London.
1587 Death of Mary Stuart.
Drake burns Spanish fleet at Cadiz.
Marlowe's "Tamburlaine."
1588 Defeat of the Armada.
Martin Marprelate Tracts.
1589 Drake plunders Corunna.
1590 *Publication of the "Faerie Queen."*
1593 *Shakspere's "Venus and Adonis."*
1594 Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity."
1596 *Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour."*
Descent upon Cadiz.
1597 Ruin of the Second Armada.
Bacon's "Essays."
1598 Revolt of Hugh O'Neill.
1599 Expedition of Earl of Essex in Ireland.
1601 Execution of Essex.
1603 Mountjoy completes the Conquest of Ireland.
Death of Elizabeth.

THE STUARTS

1603—1688

1603 James the First, died 1625.
Millenary Petition.
1604 Parliament claims to deal with both Church and State.
Hampton Court Conference.
1605 Gunpowder Plot.
Bacon's "Advancement of Learning."
1610 Parliament's Petition of Grievances.
Plantation of Ulster.
1613 Marriage of the Elector Palatine.
1614 First quarrels with the Parliament.
1615 Trial of the Earl of Somerset.
1616 Disgrace of Chief-Justice Coke.
Trial of Somerset.
Proposals for the Spanish Marriage.
Death of Shakspere.
1617 Bacon Lord Keeper.
Expedition and death of Raleigh.
The Declaration of Sports.
1618 Beginning of Thirty Years' War.
1620 Invasion of the Palatinate.
Bacon's "Novum Organum."
Landing of the Pilgrim-Fathers in New England.
1621 Impeachment of Bacon.
James tears out the Protestation of the Commons.
1623 Journey of Charles to Madrid.
1624 Resolve of War against Spain.
1625 Charles the First, died 1649.
First Parliament dissolved.
Failure of expedition against Cadiz.
1626 Buckingham impeached.
Second Parliament dissolved.
1627 Levy of Benevolence and Forced Loan.
Failure of expedition to Rochelle.
1628 The Petition of Right.
Murder of Buckingham.
Laud Bishop of London.
1629 Dissolution of Third Parliament.
Charter granted to Massachusetts.
Wentworth Lord President of the North.
1630 Puritan Emigration to New England.
1632 Wentworth Lord Deputy in Ireland.
1633 Laud Archbishop of Canterbury.
Milton's "Allegro" and "Penseroso."
Prynne's "Histrio-mastix."
1634 *Milton's "Comus."*
1636 Juxon Lord Treasurer.
Book of Canons and Common Prayer issued for Scotland.
1637 Hampden refuses to pay Ship-money.
Revolt of Edinburgh.
Trial of Hampden.
1638 *Milton's "Lycidas."*
The Scotch Covenant.
1639 Leslie at Dunse Law.
Pacification of Berwick.
1640 The Short Parliament.
The Bishops' War.
Great Council of Peers at York.
Long Parliament meets, *Nov.*
1641 Execution of Strafford, *May.*
Charles visits Scotland.
The Irish Massacre, *Oct.*
The Grand Remonstrance, *Nov.*
1642 Impeachment of Five Members, *Jan.*
Charles before Hull, *April.*
Royalists withdraw from Parliament.
Charles raises Standard at Nottingham, *August.*
Battle of Edgehill, *Oct.* 23.
Hobbes writes the "De Cive."
1643 Assembly of Divines assembles at Westminster.
Rising of the Cornishmen, *May.*
Death of Hampden, *June.*
Battle of Roundway Down, *July.*
Siege of Gloucester, *Aug.*
Taking of the Covenant, *Sept.* 25.
1644 Fight of Cropredy Bridge, *June.*
Battle of Marston Moor, *July.*
Surrender of Parliamentary Army in Cornwall, *Sept.*
Battle of Tippermuir, *Sept.*

1644 Battle of Newbury, *Oct.*
1645 Self-renouncing Ordinance, *April.*
New Model raised.
Battle of Naseby, *June* 14.
Battle of Philiphaugh, *Sept.*
1646 Charles surrenders to the Scots, *May.*
1647 Scots surrender Charles to the Houses, *Jan.* 30.
Army elects Adjutators, *April.*
The King seized at Holmby House, *June.*
"Humble Representation" of the Army, *June.*
Expulsion of the Eleven Members.
Army occupies London, *Aug.*
Flight of the King, *Nov.*
Secret Treaty of Charles with the Scots, *Dec.*
1648 Outbreak of the Royalist Revolt, *Feb.*
Revolt of the Fleet, and of Kent, *May.*
Fairfax and Cromwell in Essex and Wales, *June—July.*
Battle of Preston, *Aug.* 18.
Surrender of Colchester, *Aug.* 27.
Pride's Purge, *Dec.*
Royal Society begins at Oxford.
1649 Execution of Charles I., *Jan.* 30.
Scotland proclaims Charles II.
England proclaims itself a Commonwealth.
Cromwell storms Drogheda, *Sept.*
1650 Cromwell enters Scotland.
Battle of Dunbar, *Sept.* 3.
1651 Battle of Worcester, *Sept* 3.
Union with Scotland and Ireland.
Hobbes's "Leviathan."
1652 Outbreak of Dutch War, *May.*
Victory of Tromp, *Nov.*
1653 Victory of Blake, *Feb.*
Cromwell drives out the Parliament, *April* 20.
Constituent Convention (Barebones Parliament), *July.*
Convention dissolves, *Dec.*
The Instrument of Government.
Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector, died 1658.
1654 Peace concluded with Holland.
First Protectorate Parliament, *Sept.*
1655 Dissolution of the Parliament, *Jan.*
The Major-Generals.
Settlement of Scotland and Ireland.
Settlement of the Church.
Blake in the Mediterranean.
War with Spain and Conquest of Jamaica.
1656 Second Protectorate Parliament, *Sept.*
1657 Blake's victory at Santa Cruz.
Cromwell refuses title of King.
Act of Government.
1658 Parliament dissolved, *Feb.*
Battle of the Dunes.
Capture of Dunkirk.
Death of Cromwell, *Sept.* 3.
Richard Cromwell, Lord Protector, died 1712.
1659 Third Protectorate Parliament.
Parliament dissolved.
Long Parliament recalled.
Long Parliament again driven out.
1660 Monk enters London.
The "Convention" Parliament.
Charles the Second, lands at Dover, *May*, died 1685.
Union of Scotland and Ireland undone.
1661 Cavalier Parliament begins.
Act of Uniformity re-enacted.
1662 Puritan clergy driven out.
Royal Society at London.
1663 Dispensing Bill fails.
1664 Conventicle Act.
Dutch War begins.
1665 Five Mile Act.
Plague of London.
Newton's Theory of Fluxions.
1667 The Dutch in the Medway.
Dismissal of Clarendon.
Peace of Breda.
Lewis attacks Flanders.
Milton's "Paradise Lost."
1668 The Triple Alliance.
Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.
1669 Ashley shrinks back from toleration to Catholics.
1670 Treaty of Dover.
Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" written.
1671 *Milton's "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes."*
Newton's Theory of Light.
Closing of the Exchequer.
1672 Declaration of Indulgence.
War begins with Holland.
Ashley made Chancellor.
Declaration of Indulgence withdrawn.
1673 The Test Act.
Shaftesbury dismissed.
Shaftesbury takes the lead of the Country Party.
1674 Bill of Protestant Securities fails.
Charles makes peace with Holland.
Danby Lord Treasurer.
1675 Treaty of mutual aid between Charles and Lewis.
1677 Shaftesbury sent to the Tower.
Bill for Security of the Church fails.
Address of the Commons for War with France.
Prince of Orange marries Mary.
1678 Peace of Nimeguen.
Oates invents the Popish Plot.
Fall of Danby.
New Ministry with Shaftesbury at its head.
Temple's plan for a new Council.
1679 New Parliament meets.
Habeas Corpus Act passed.
Exclusion Bill introduced.
Parliament dissolved
Shaftesbury dismissed.
1680 Committee for agitation formed.
Monmouth pretends to the throne.
Petitioners and Abhorrers.

1680 Exclusion Bill thrown out by the Lords.
Trial of Lord Stafford.
1681 Parliament at Oxford.
Limitation Bill rejected.
Monmouth and Shaftesbury arrested.
1682 Conspiracy and flight of Shaftesbury.
Rye-house Plot.
1683 Death of Shaftesbury.
Execution of Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney.
1684 Town charters quashed.
Army increased.
1685 James the Second, died 1701.
Insurrection of Argyle and Monmouth.
Battle of Sedgemoor, *July* 6.
The Bloody Circuit.
Army raised to 20,000 men.
Revocation of Edict of Nantes.
1686 Parliament refuses to repeal Test Act.
1686 Test Act dispensed with by royal authority.
Ecclesiastical Commission set up.
1687 *Newton's "Principia."*
Expulsion of the Fellows of Magdalen.
Dismissal of Lords Rochester and Clarendon.
Declaration of Indulgence.
The Boroughs regulated.
William of Orange protests against the Declaration.
Tyrconnell made Lord Deputy in Ireland.
1688 Clergy refuse to read Declaration of Indulgence.
Threat of the Seven Bishops.
Irish troops brought over to England.
Lewis attacks Germany.
William of Orange lands at Torbay.
Flight of James.

MODERN ENGLAND

1689—1914

1689 Convention Parliament.
Declaration of Rights.
William and Mary made King and Queen.
William forms the Grand Alliance against Lewis.
Battle of Killiecrankie, *July* 27.
Siege of Londonderry.
Mutiny Bill.
Toleration Bill.
Bill of Rights.
Secession of the Non-jurors.
1690 Abjuration Bill and Act of Grace.
Battle of Beachy Head, *June* 30.
Battle of the Boyne, *July* 1.
William repulsed from Limerick.
1691 Battle of Aughrim, *July*.
Capitulation and Treaty of Limerick.
1692 Massacre of Glencoe.
Battle of La Hogue, *May* 19.
1693 Sunderland's plan of a Ministry.
1694 Bank of England set up.
Death of Mary.
1696 Currency restored.
1697 Peace of Ryswick.
1698 First Partition Treaty.
1700 Second Partition Treaty.
1701 Duke of Anjou becomes King of Spain.
Death of James the Second.
Act of Settlement passed.
1702 Anne, died 1714.
1704 Battle of Blenheim, *August* 13.
Harley and St. John take office.
1705 Victories of Peterborough in Spain.
1706 Battle of Ramillies, *May* 23.
1707 Act of Union with Scotland.
1708 Battle of Oudenarde.
Dismissal of Harley and St. John.
1709 Battle of Malplaquet.
1710 Trial of Sacheverel.
Tory Ministry of Harley and St. John.
1712 Dismissal of Marlborough.
1713 Treaty of Utrecht.
1714 George the First, died 1727.
Ministry of Townshend and Walpole.
1715 Jacobite Revolt under Lord Mar.
1716 Ministry of Lord Stanhope.
The Septennial Bill.
1717 The Triple Alliance.
1718 The Quadruple Alliance.
1720 Failure of the Peerage Bill.
The South Sea Company.
1721 Ministry of Sir Robert Walpole.
1722 Exile of Bishop Atterbury.
1727 War with Austria and Spain.
George the Second, died 1760.
1729 Treaty of Seville.
1730 Free exportation of American rice allowed.
1731 Treaty of Vienna.
1733 Walpole's Excise Bill.
War of the Polish Succession.
Family Compact between France and Spain.
1737 Death of Queen Caroline.
1738 *The Methodists appear in London.*
1739 War declared with Spain.
1740 War of the Austrian Succession.
1742 Resignation of Walpole.
1743 Ministry of Henry Pelham.
Battle of Dettingen, *June* 27.
1745 Battle of Fontenoy, *May* 31.
Charles Edward lands in Scotland.
Battle of Prestonpans, *Sept* 21.
Charles Edward reaches Derby, *Dec.* 4.

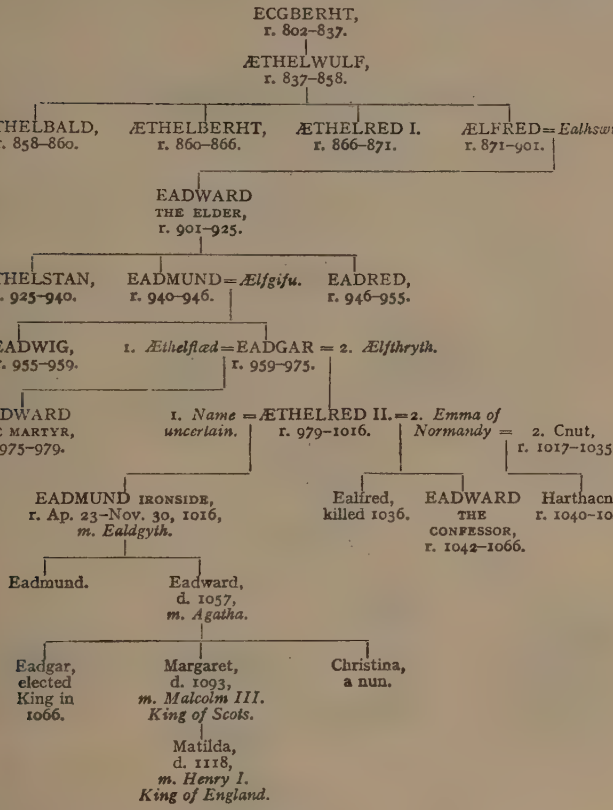
1746 Battle of Falkirk, *Jan.* 23.
Battle of Culloden, *April* 16.
1748 Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.
1751 Clive's surprise of Arcot.
1754 Death of Henry Pelham.
Ministry of Duke of Newcastle.
1755 The Seven Years' War.
Defeat of General Braddock.
1756 Loss of Port Mahon.
Retreat of Admiral Byng.
1757 Convention of Closter-Seven.
Ministry of William Pitt.
Battle of Plassey, *June* 23.
1758 Capture of Louisburg and Cape Breton.
Capture of Fort Duquesne.
1759 Battle of Minden, *August* 1.
Battle of Quiberon Bay, *Nov.* 20.
Capture of Fort Niagara and Ticonderoga.
Wolfe's victory on heights of Abraham.
1760 George the Third, died 1820.
Battle of Wandewash.
1761 Pitt resigns office.
Brindley's Canal over the Irwell.
1763 Peace of Paris.
Wedgewood establishes potteries.
1764 *Hargreaves invents Spinning Jenny.*
1765 Stamp Act passed.
Ministry of Lord Rockingham.
Meeting and Protest of American Congress.
Watt invents Steam Engine.
1766 Repeal of the Stamp Act.
Ministry of Lord Chatham.
1768 Ministry of the Duke of Grafton.
Expulsion of Wilkes from House of Commons.
Arkwright invents Spinning Machine.
1769 Wilkes three times elected for Middlesex.
House of Commons seats Col. Luttrell.
Occupation of Boston by British troops.
Letters of Junius.
1770 Ministry of Lord North.
Chatham's proposal of Parliamentary Reform.
1771 Last attempt to prevent Parliamentary reporting.
Beginning of the great English Journals.
1773 Hastings appointed Governor-General.
Boston tea-ships.
1774 Military occupation of Boston.
Its port closed.
Massachusetts Charter altered.
Congress assembles at Philadelphia.
1775 Rejection of Chatham's plan of conciliation.
Skirmish at Lexington.
Americans, under Washington, besiege Boston.
Battle of Bunker's Hill.
Southern Colonies expel their Governors.
1776 *Crompton invents the Mule.*
Arnold invades Canada.
Evacuation of Boston.
Declaration of Independence, *July* 4.
Battles of Brooklyn and Trenton.
Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations."
1777 Battle of Brandywine.
Surrender of Saratoga, *Oct.* 13.
Chatham proposes Federal Union.
Washington at Valley Forge.
1778 Alliance of France with United States.
Death of Chatham.
1779 Alliance of Spain with United States.
Siege of Gibraltar.
Armed Neutrality of Northern Powers.
The Irish Volunteers.
1780 Capture of Charleston.
Descent of Hyder Ali on the Carnatic.
1781 Defeat of Hyder at Porto Novo.
Surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.
1782 Ministry of Lord Rockingham.
Victories of Rodney.
Repeal of Poyning's Act.
Pitt's Bill for Parliamentary Reform.
Burke's Bill of Economical Reform.
Shelburne Ministry.
Repulse of Allies from Gibraltar.
Treaties of Paris and Versailles.
1783 Coalition Ministry of Fox and North.
Fox's India Bill.
Ministry of Pitt.
1784 Pitt's India Bill.
Financial Reforms.
1785 Parliamentary Reform Bill.
Free Trade Bill between England and Ireland.
1786 Trial of Warren Hastings.
1787 Treaty of Commerce with France.
1788 The Regency Bill.
1789 Meeting of States-General at Versailles.
New French Constitution.
Triple Alliance for defence of Turkey.
1790 Quarrel over Nootka Sound.
Pitt defends Poland.
Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution."
1791 Representative Government set up in Canada.
Fox's Libel Act.
Burke's "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs."
1792 Pitt hinders Holland from joining the Coalition.
France opens the Scheldt.
Pitt's efforts for peace.
The United Irishmen.
1793 France declares War on England.
Part of Whigs join Pitt.
English army lands in Flanders.
English driven from Toulon.
1794 English driven from Holland.
Suspension of Habeas Corpus Act.

1794 Victory of Lord Howe, *June* 1.
1796 *Burke's "Letters on a Regicide Peace."*
1797 England alone in the War with France.
Battle of Camperdown.
Battle of Cape St. Vincent
1798 Irish revolt crushed at Vinegar Hill.
Battle of the Nile.
1799 Pitt revives the Coalition against France.
Conquest of Mysore.
1800 Surrender of Malta to English Fleet.
Armed Neutrality of Northern Powers.
Act of Union with Ireland.
1801 George the Third, rejects Pitt's plan of Catholic Emancipation.
Administration of Mr. Addington.
Surrender of French army in Egypt.
Battle of Copenhagen.
1802 Peace of Amiens.
Publication of "Edinburgh Review."
1803 Buonaparte declares War.
Battle of Assaye.
1804 Second Ministry of Pitt.
1805 Battle of Trafalgar, *Oct.* 21.
1806 Death of Pitt, *Jan.* 23.
Ministry of Lord Grenville.
Death of Fox.
1807 Orders in Council.
Abolition of Slave Trade.
Ministry of Duke of Portland.
Seizure of Danish fleet.
1808 America passes Non-Intercourse Act.
Battle of Vimiera, and Convention of Cintra.
1809 Battle of Corunna, *Jan.* 16.
Wellesley drives Soult from Oporto.
Battle of Talavera, *July* 27.
Expedition against Walcheren.
Ministry of Spencer Perceval.
Revival of Parliamentary Reform.
1810 Battle of Busaco.
Lines of Torres Vedras.
1811 Prince of Wales becomes Regent.
Battle of Fuentes d'Onore, *May* 5.
Wellington repulsed from Badajoz and Almeida.
Luddite Riots.
1812 Assassination of Spencer Perceval.
Ministry of Lord Liverpool.
Storm of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz.
America declares War against England.
Battle of Salamanca, *July* 22.
Wellington retreats from Burgos.
Victories of American Frigates.
1813 Battle of Vittoria, *June* 21.
Battles of the Pyrenees.
Wellington enters France, *Oct.*
Americans attack Canada.
1814 Battle of Orthez.
Battle of Toulouse, *April* 10.
Battle of Chippewa, *July*.
Raid upon Washington.
British repulses at Plattsburg and New Orleans.
1815 Battle of Quatre Bras, *June* 16.
Battle of Waterloo, *June* 18.
Treaty of Vienna.
1819 Manchester Massacre.
1820 Cato Street Conspiracy.
George the Fourth, died 1830.
Bill for the Queen's Divorce.
1822 Canning Foreign Minister.
1823 Mr. Huskisson joins the Ministry.
1826 Expedition to Portugal.
Recognition of South American States.
1827 Ministry of Mr. Canning.
Ministry of Lord Goderich.
Battle of Navarino.
1828 Ministry of Duke of Wellington.
1829 Catholic Emancipation Bill.
1830 William the Fourth, died 1837.
Ministry of Lord Grey.
Opening of Liverpool and Manchester Railway.
1831 Reform Agitation.
1832 Parliamentary Reform Bill passed, *June* 7.
1833 Suppression of Colonial Slavery.
East India trade thrown open.
1834 Ministry of Lord Melbourne.
New Poor Law.
System of National Education begun.
Ministry of Sir Robert Peel.
1835 Ministry of Lord Melbourne replaced.
Municipal Corporation Act.
1836 General Registration Act.
Civil Marriages Act.
1837 Victoria.
1839 Committee of Privy Council for Education instituted.
Demands for a People's Charter.
Formation of Anti-Corn-Law League
Revolt in Canada.
War with China.
Occupation of Cabul.
1840 Quadruple Alliance with France, Portugal, and Spain.
Bombardment of Acre.
1841 Ministry of Sir Robert Peel.
1842 Income Tax revived.
Peace with China.
Massacre of English Army in Affghanistan.
Victories of Pollock in Affghanistan.
1845 Battles of Moodkee and Ferozeshah.
1846 Battle of Sobraon.
Annexation of Scinde.
Repeal of the Corn Laws.
Ministry of Lord John Russell.
1848 Suppression of the Chartists and Irish rebels.
1849 Victory of Goojerat.
Annexation of the Punjaub.
1852 Ministry of Lord Derby.
Ministry of Lord Aberdeen.
1854 Alliance with France against Russia.
Siege of Sebastopol.
Battle of Inkermann, *Nov.* 5.
1855 Ministry of Lord Palmerston.
Capture of Sebastopol.

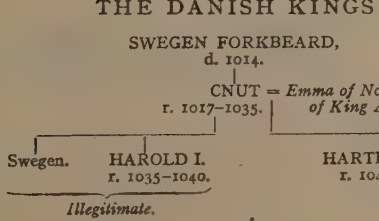
1856 Peace of Paris with Russia.
1857 Sepoy Mutiny in Bengal.
1858 Sovereignty of India transferred to the Crown.
Volunteer movement.
Second Ministry of Lord Derby.
1859 Second Ministry of Lord Palmerston.
1865 Ministry of Lord Russell.
1866 Third Ministry of Lord Derby.
1867 Parliamentary Reform Bill.
1868 Ministry of Mr. Disraeli.
Ministry of Mr. Gladstone.
1869 Disestablishment of Episcopal Church in Ireland.
1870 Irish Land Bill.
Education Bill.
1871 Abolition of religious tests in Universities.
Army Bill.
1872 Ballot Bill.
1874 Second Ministry of Mr. Disraeli.
1875 England purchases Suez Canal Shares.
Public Health Act.
1876 Elementary Education Act.
Trade Union Act.
1877 Transvaal annexed.
1878 Treaty of Berlin.
1880 Gladstone's Second Ministry.
Transvaal War begins.
Elementary Education Act.
Employers' Liability Act.
1881 Convention of Pretoria.
1884 Convention of London.
1885 Third Parliamentary Reform Act.
1886 Gladstone's Third Ministry.
Defeat of Home Rule Bill.
Salisbury's Second Ministry.
1887 Queen Victoria's Jubilee.
1888 County and District Councils established.
1889 London Dock Strike.
Technical Instruction Act.
Act for Prevention of Cruelty to Children.
1890 Housing Act.
1892 Gladstone's Fourth Ministry.
1893 Second Home Rule Bill.
1894 Parish Councils Act.
Harcourt Budget.
Gladstone resigns Premiership and is succeeded by Lord Rosebery.
1895 Lord Salisbury's Third Ministry.
1897 Employers' Liability Act.
1899 Appointment of Irish Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.
War with South African Republics (1899—1902) begins.
1900 Mr. Balfour's Ministry.
Federal Constitution established for Australia.
1901 Death of Queen Victoria and Accession of Edward VII.
1902 Peace of Vereeniging.
Education Act.
Anglo-Japanese Alliance.
1903 Irish Land Purchase Act.
1904 Committee of Imperial Defence.
1905 Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Ministry.
1906 General Election.
Trades Disputes Act.
Transvaal obtains self-government.
1907 Orange River Free State obtains self-government.
Small Holdings Act.
1908 Old Age Pensions Act.
House of Lords rejects Licensing Bill.
1909 Trade Boards Act.
Report of Poor Law Commission.
Lloyd George Budget.
1910 General Elections of January and December.
Death of Edward VII. and Accession of George V.
1911 Parliament Act.
National Health Insurance Act.
1914 Outbreak of European War.
Home Rule for Ireland.
Disestablishment of Welsh Church.

GENEALOGICAL TABLES

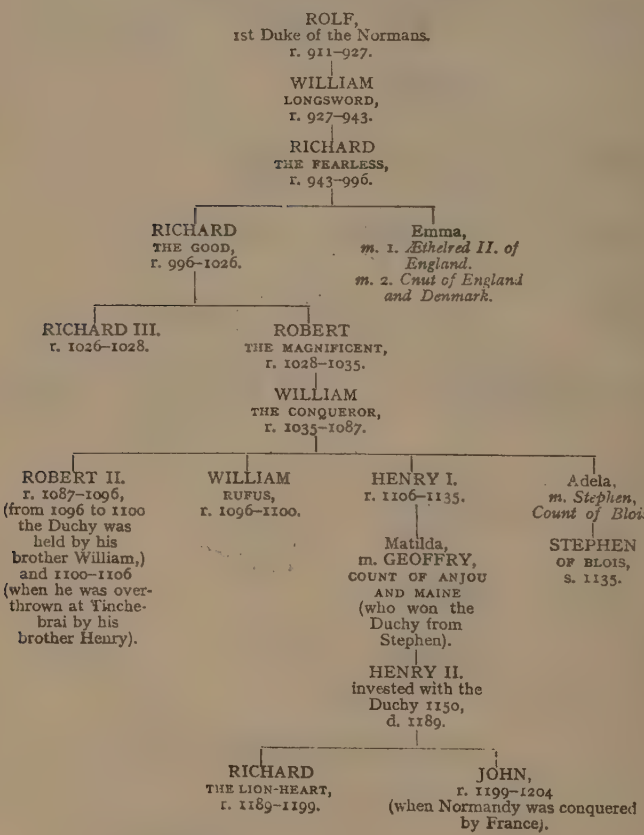
KINGS OF THE HOUSE OF CERDIC, FROM ECGBERHT


ECGBERHT, r. 802–837.
ÆTHELWULF, r. 837–858.
ÆTHELBALD, r. 858–860.
ÆTHELBERHT, r. 860–866.
ÆTHELRED I. r. 866–871.
ÆLFRED = Ealhswith. r. 871–901.
EADWARD THE ELDER, r. 901–925.
ÆTHELSTAN, r. 925–940.
EADMUND = Ælfgifu. r. 940–946.
EADRED, r. 946–955.
EADWIG, r. 955–959.
1. Æthelflæd = EADGAR = 2. Ælfthryth. r. 959–975.
EADWARD THE MARTYR, r. 975–979.
1. Name uncertain. = ÆTHELRED II. r. 979–1016. = 2. Emma of Normandy = 2. Cnut, r. 1017–1035.
EADMUND IRONSIDE, r. Ap. 23–Nov. 30, 1016, m. Ealdgyth.
Ealfred, killed 1036.
EADWARD THE CONFESSOR, r. 1042–1066.
Harthacnut, r. 1040–1042.
Eadmund.
Eadward, d. 1057, m. Agatha.
Eadgar, elected King in 1066.
Margaret, d. 1093, m. Malcolm III. King of Scots.
Christina, a nun.
Matilda, d. 1118, m. Henry I. King of England.

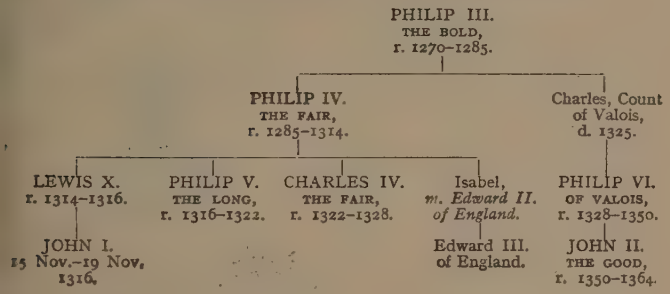
THE DANISH KINGS


SWEGEN FORKBEARD, d. 1014.
CNUT = Emma of Normandy, widow of King Æthelred II. r. 1017–1035.
Swegen.
HAROLD I. r. 1035–1040.
HARTHACNUT, r. 1040–1042.
Illegitimate.

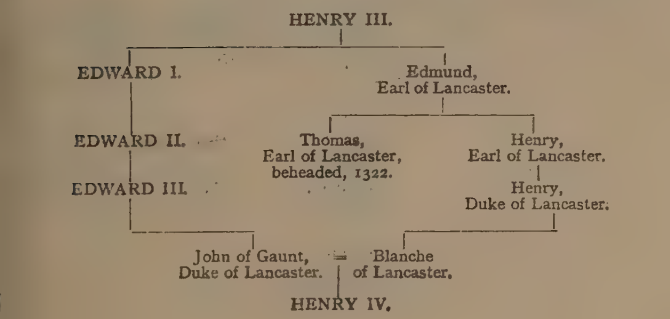
DUKES OF THE NORMANS

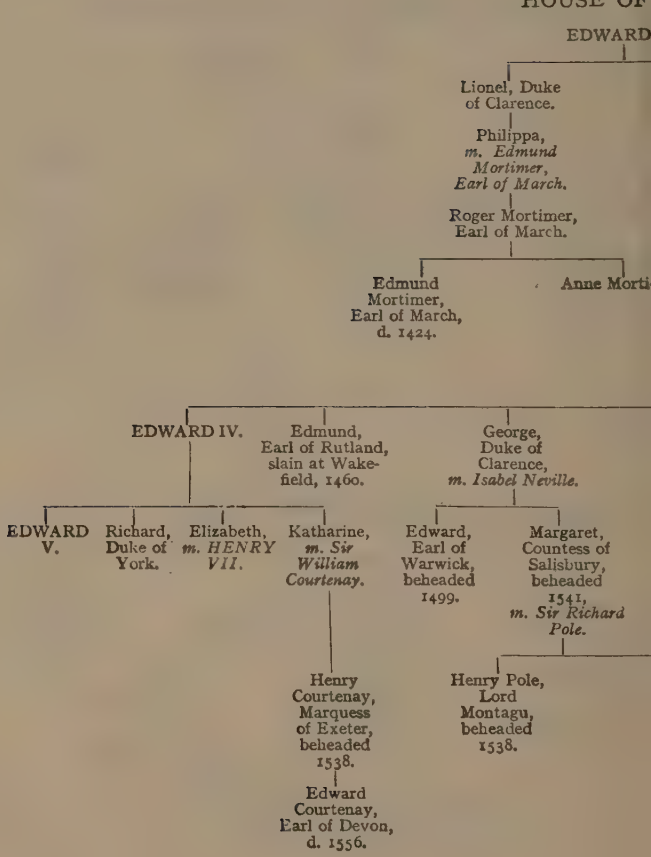


Claim of EDWARD III. to the French Crown



Descent of HENRY IV.




HOUSE OF
EDWARD
Lionel, Duke of Clarence.
Philippa, m. Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March.
Roger Mortimer, Earl of March.
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, d. 1424.
Anne Morti
EDWARD IV.
Edmund, Earl of Rutland, slain at Wakefield, 1460.
George, Duke of Clarence, m. Isabel Neville.
EDWARD V.
Richard, Duke of York.
Elizabeth, m. HENRY VII.
Katharine, m. Sir William Courtenay.
Edward, Earl of Warwick, beheaded 1499.
Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, beheaded 1541, m. Sir Richard Pole.
Henry Courtenay, Marquess of Exeter, beheaded 1538.
Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon, d. 1556.
Henry Pole, Lord Montagu, beheaded 1538.

YORK

III.

Edmund of Langley, Duke of York.

mer= Richard, Earl of Cambridge, beheaded 1415.

Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, slain at Wakefield, 1460.

RICHARD III. *m. Anne Neville.*

Elizabeth = *John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk.*

Margaret, *m. Charles, Duke of Burgundy.*

Edward, Prince of Wales, d. 1484.

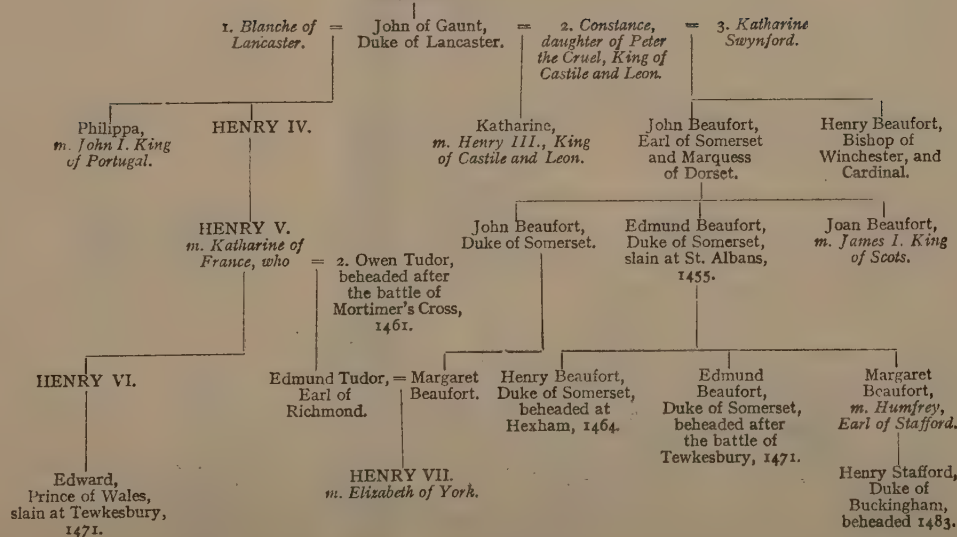
John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, slain at Stoke, 1487.

Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, beheaded 1513.

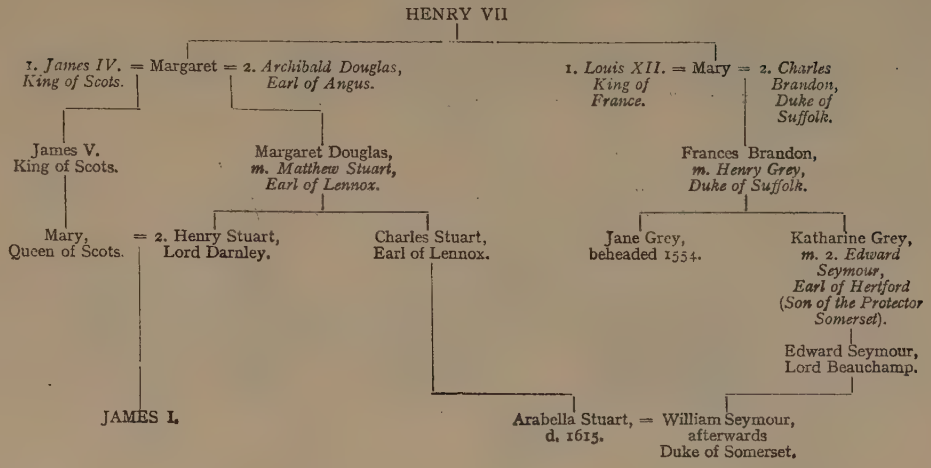
Richard de la Pole, slain at the battle of Pavia, 1525.

Reginald Pole, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Cardinal, d. 1558.

HOUSE OF LANCASTER

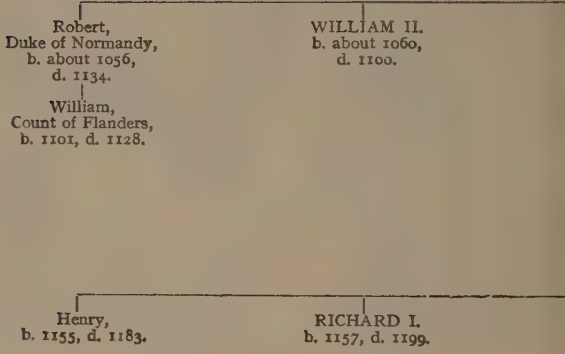

EDWARD III.
1. Blanche of Lancaster.
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.
2. Constance, daughter of Peter the Cruel, King of Castile and Leon.
3. Katharine Swynford.
Philippa, m. John I. King of Portugal.
HENRY IV.
Katharine, m. Henry III., King of Castile and Leon.
John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset and Marquess of Dorset.
Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, and Cardinal.
HENRY V. m. Katharine of France, who
2. Owen Tudor, beheaded after the battle of Mortimer's Cross, 1461.
John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset.
Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, slain at St. Albans, 1455.
Joan Beaufort, m. James I. King of Scots.
HENRY VI.
Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond.
Margaret Beaufort.
Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, beheaded at Hexham, 1464.
Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, beheaded after the battle of Tewkesbury, 1471.
Margaret Beaufort, m. Humfrey, Earl of Stafford.
Edward, Prince of Wales, slain at Tewkesbury, 1471.
HENRY VII. m. Elizabeth of York.
Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, beheaded 1483.

DESCENDANTS OF THE DAUGHTERS OF HENRY VII.


HENRY VII
1. James IV. King of Scots.
Margaret
2. Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus.
1. Louis XII. King of France.
Mary
2. Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.
James V. King of Scots.
Margaret Douglas, m. Matthew Stuart, Earl of Lennox.
Frances Brandon, m. Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk.
Mary, Queen of Scots.
2. Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley.
Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox.
Jane Grey, beheaded 1554.
Katharine Grey, m. 2. Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford (Son of the Protector Somerset).
Edward Seymour, Lord Beauchamp.
JAMES I.
Arabella Stuart, d. 1615.
William Seymour, afterwards Duke of Somerset.

THE SOVEREIGNS

Since the



OF ENGLAND

Norman Conquest

b. about 1027, d. 1087.
of Flanders.

HENRY I.
b. 1068,
d. 1135.
m. 1. *Matilda of Scotland.*

Matilda,
d. 1167.
m. 2. *Geoffrey, Count of Anjou.*

HENRY II.
b. 1133, d. 1189.
m. Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Geoffrey,
b. 1158, d. 1186.
m. Constance, heiress of Britanny.

Arthur,
Duke of Britanny,
b. 1187.

Adela,
d. 1137.
m. Stephen, Count of Blois.

STEPHEN,
d. 1154.
m. Matilda of Boulogne.

Eustace,
Count of Boulogne,
d. 1153.

William,
Count of Boulogne,
d. 1160.

JOHN,
b. 1166, d. 1216.
m. 2. *Isabel of Angoulême.*

HENRY III.
b. 1207, d. 1272.
m. Eleanor of Provence.

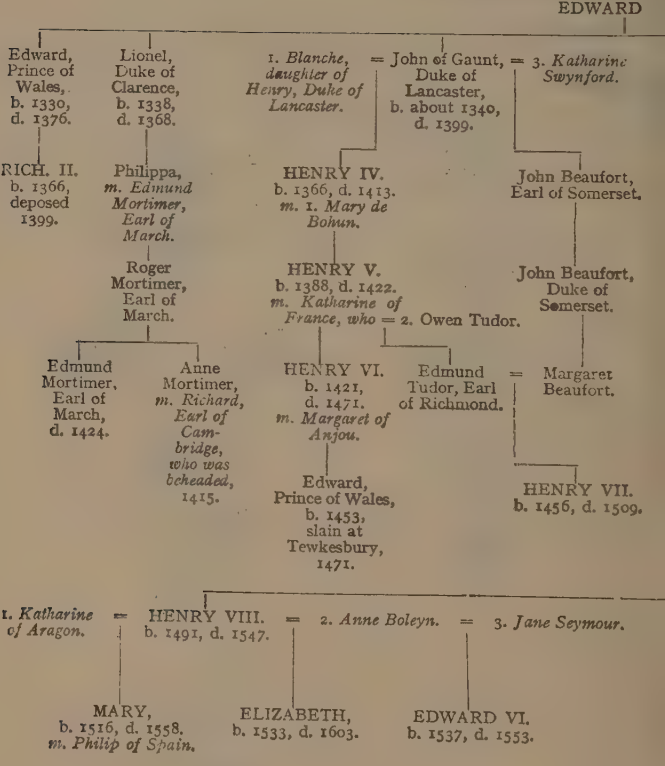
EDWARD I.
b. 1239, d. 1307.
m. 1. *Eleanor of Castile.*

EDWARD II.
b. 1284,
murdered 1327.
m. Isabel of France.

EDWARD III.
b. 1312, d. 1377.
m. Philippa of Hainault.

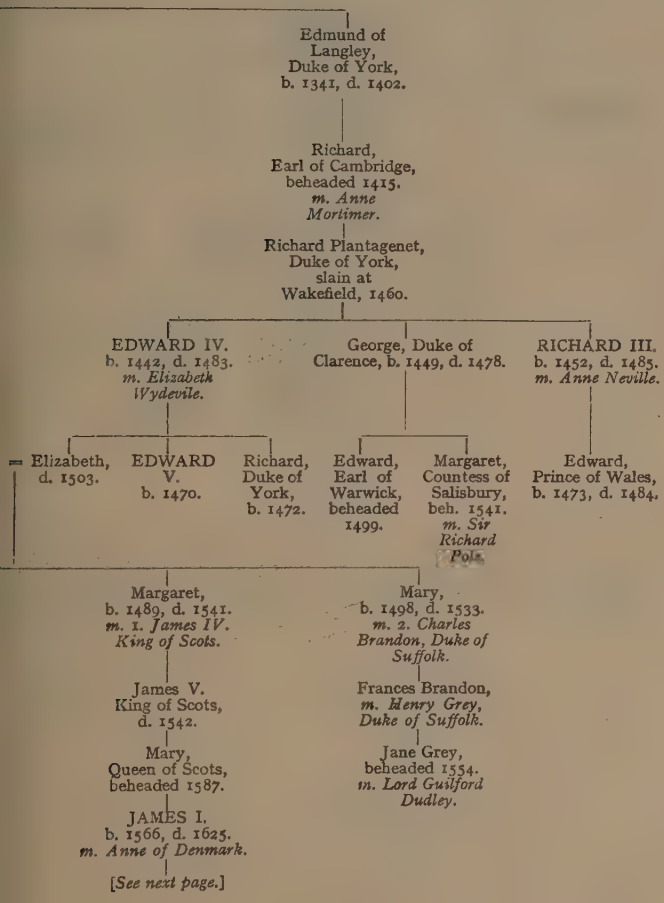
[*See next page.*]

THE SOVEREIGNS


EDWARD
Edward, Prince of Wales, b. 1330, d. 1376.
Lionel, Duke of Clarence, b. 1338, d. 1368.
1. Blanche, daughter of Henry, Duke of Lancaster.
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, b. about 1340, d. 1399.
3. Katharine Swynford.
RICH. II. b. 1366, deposed 1399.
Philippa, m. Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March.
HENRY IV. b. 1366, d. 1413. m. 1. Mary de Bohun.
John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset.
Roger Mortimer, Earl of March.
HENRY V. b. 1388, d. 1422. m. Katharine of France, who = 2. Owen Tudor.
John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset.
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, d. 1424.
Anne Mortimer, m. Richard, Earl of Cambridge, who was beheaded, 1415.
HENRY VI. b. 1421, d. 1471. m. Margaret of Anjou.
Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond.
Margaret Beaufort.
Edward, Prince of Wales, b. 1453, slain at Tewkesbury, 1471.
HENRY VII. b. 1456, d. 1509.
1. Katharine of Aragon.
HENRY VIII. b. 1491, d. 1547.
2. Anne Boleyn.
3. Jane Seymour.
MARY, b. 1516, d. 1558. m. Philip of Spain.
ELIZABETH, b. 1533, d. 1603.
EDWARD VI. b. 1537, d. 1553.

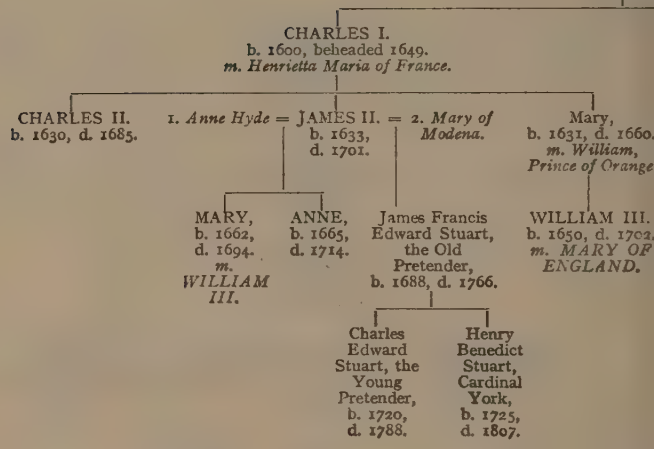
OF ENGLAND—*continued*

III.


Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, b. 1341, d. 1402.
Richard, Earl of Cambridge, beheaded 1415. m. Anne Mortimer.
Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, slain at Wakefield, 1460.
EDWARD IV. b. 1442, d. 1483. m. Elizabeth Wydevile.
George, Duke of Clarence, b. 1449, d. 1478.
RICHARD III. b. 1452, d. 1485. m. Anne Neville.
= Elizabeth, d. 1503.
EDWARD V. b. 1470.
Richard, Duke of York, b. 1472.
Edward, Earl of Warwick, beheaded 1499.
Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, beh. 1541. m. Sir Richard Pole.
Edward, Prince of Wales, b. 1473, d. 1484.
Margaret, b. 1489, d. 1541. m. 1. James IV. King of Scots.
Mary, b. 1498, d. 1533. m. 2. Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.
James V. King of Scots, d. 1542.
Frances Brandon, m. Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk.
Mary, Queen of Scots, beheaded 1587.
Jane Grey, beheaded 1554. m. Lord Guilford Dudley.
JAMES I. b. 1566, d. 1625. m. Anne of Denmark.

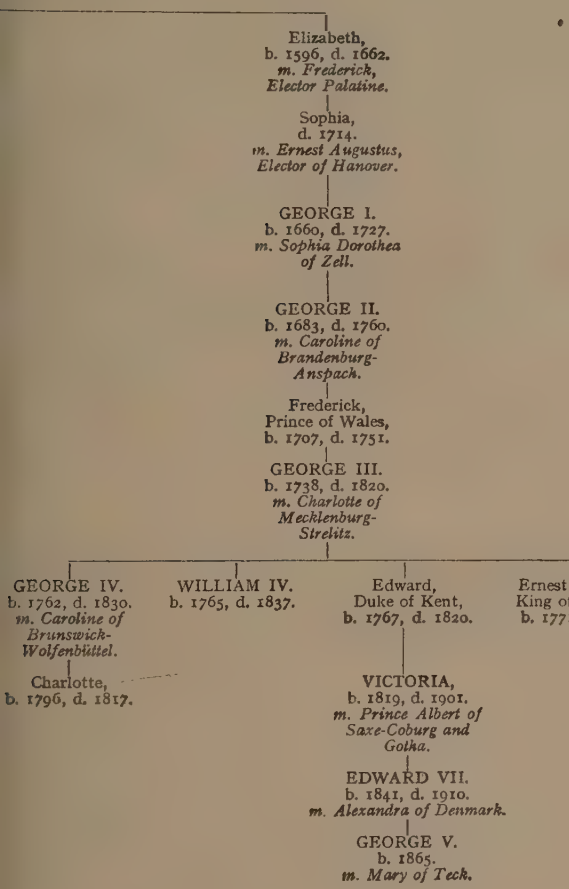
[*See next page.*]

THE SOVEREIGNS



OF ENGLAND—*continued*

I.



ENGLAND
English Miles
0 20 40 60
SCOTLAND
IRELAND
NORTH SEA
IRISH SEA
ENGLISH CHANNEL
CARDIGAN BAY
FRANCE
Dundee
Firth of Tay
Perth
Firth of Forth
Stirling
Glasgow
EDINBURGH
Berwick
Lanark
R. Tweed
Ayr
Selkirk
Firth of Clyde
Solway Firth
Dumfries
Carlisle
Whitehaven
Penrith
Maryport
Cheviot Hills
Alnwick
Morpeth
Newcastle
N. & S. Shields
Hexham
Sunderland
Durham
Hartlepool
Darlington
Stockton
Whitby
N. Allerton
Thirsk
Scarborough
Flamborough Hd.
Ripon
Lancaster
Kendal
I. of Man
Douglas
Leeds
York
Hull
Preston
Bradford
Bury
Bolton
Oldham
Doncaster
R. Humber
Liverpool
Wigan
Manchester
Lincoln
Louth
Anglesey
Holyhead
Birkenhead
Stockport
Sheffield
Chester
Bangor
Flint
Caernarvon
Congleton
Mansfield
Boston
The Wash
Cromer
King's Lynn
Stoke
Derby
Nottingham
Llangollen
Stafford
Leicester
Dolgelly
Shrewsbury
Peterborough
Norwich
Welshpool
Wolverhampton
Yarmouth
Aberystwyth
Birmingham
Ely
Lowestoft
Dudley
Rugby
Huntingdon
Newmarket
Bury St Edmunds
Radnor
Kidderminster
Warwick
Cambridge
Cardigan
Leominster
Worcester
Northampton
Bedford
Ipswich
Hereford
Tewkesbury
Colchester
Carmarthen
Brecknock
Cheltenham
Aylesbury
Hertford
Gloucester
Oxford
Merthyr Tydfil
Abergavenny
Chelmsford
Abroath
Cardiff
Newport
Cirencester
LONDON
R. Thames
Ramsgate
Swansea
Bristol
Reading
Devizes
Chatham
Bristol Channel
Bath
Newbury
Windsor
Croydon
Maidstone
Basingstoke
Canterbury
Dover
Barnstaple
Wells
Guildford
Tunbridge Wells
Folkestone
Salisbury
Winchester
Bideford
Taunton
Yeovil
Hastings
Strait of Dover
Calais
Tiverton
Southampton
Chichester
Eastbourne
Boulogne
Launceston
Dorchester
Poole
Exeter
Portsmouth
Brighton
Newhaven
Beachy Hd.
I. of Wight
Torbay
Teignmouth
Exmouth
Weymouth
Torquay
Dartmouth
Penzance
Land's End
Falmouth
Dieppe
W.Gr. 0 E.Gr.

A SHORT HISTORY

OF

THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

CHAPTER I

THE ENGLISH KINGDOMS, 607—1013

SECTION I.—BRITAIN AND THE ENGLISH

[*Authorities.*—Stubbs, "Constitutional History of England"; Maitland, "Domesday Book and Beyond"; Chadwick, "Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions." For a discussion of the original settlement of the English, see Chadwick, "Origin of the English People."]

Old England

FOR the fatherland of the English race we must look far away from England itself. In the fifth century after the birth of Christ, the one country which bore the name of England was what we now call Sleswick, a district in the heart of the peninsula which parts the Baltic from the Northern seas. Its pleasant pastures, its black-timbered homesteads, its prim little townships looking down on inlets of purple water, were then but a wild waste of heather and sand, girt along the coast with sunless woodland, broken only on the western side by meadows which crept down to the marshes and the sea. The dwellers in this district were one out of three tribes, all belonging to the same Low German branch of the Teutonic family, who at the moment when history discovers them were bound together in some loose fashion by the ties of a common blood and a common speech. To the north of the English lay the tribe of the Jutes, whose name is still preserved in their district of Jutland. To the south of them the tribe of the Saxons wandered over the sand-flats of Holstein, and along the marshes of Friesland and the Elbe. How close was the union of these tribes was shown by their use of a common name, while the choice of this name points out the tribe which at the moment when we first meet them must have been strongest and most powerful in the confederacy. Although they were all known as Saxons by the Roman people who touched them only on their southern border where the Saxons dwelt, and who remained ignorant of the very existence of the English or the Jutes, the three tribes bore among themselves the name of the central tribe of their league, the name of Englishmen.

The English people

Of the temper and life of these English folk in this Old England we know little. But, from the glimpses which we catch of them

when conquest had brought these Englishmen to the shores of Britain, their political and social organization must have been that of the German race to which they belonged. The basis of their society was the free landholder. In the English tongue he alone was known as "the man," or "the churl"; and two English phrases set his freedom vividly before us. He was "the free-necked man," whose long hair floated over a neck that had never bent to a lord. He was "the weaponed man," who alone bore spear and sword, for he alone possessed the right which in such a state of society formed the main check upon lawless outrage, the right of private war. Justice had to spring from each man's personal action; and every freeman was his own avenger. But, even in the earliest forms of English society of which we catch traces, this right of self-defence was being modified and restricted by a growing sense of public justice. The "blood-wite," or compensation in money for personal wrong, was the first effort of the tribe as a whole to regulate private revenge. The freeman's life and the freeman's limb had each on this system its legal price. "Eye for eye," ran the rough code, and "life for life," or for each fair damages. We see a further step towards the recognition of a wrong as done not to the individual man, but to the people at large, in another custom of the very earliest times. The price of life or limb was paid, not by the wrong-doer to the man he wronged, but by the family or house of the wrong-doer to the family or house of the wronged. Order and law were thus made to rest in each little group of English people upon the blood-bond which knit its families together; every outrage was held to have been done by all who were linked by blood to the doer of it, every crime to have been done against all who were linked by blood to the sufferer from it. From this sense of the value of the family bond as a means of restraining the wrong-doer by forces which the tribe as a whole did not as yet possess sprang the first rude forms of English justice. Each kinsman was his kinsman's keeper, bound to protect him from wrong, to hinder him from wrong-doing, and to suffer with and pay for him if wrong were done. So fully was this principle recognised that, even if any man was charged before his fellow-tribesmen with crime, his kinsfolk still remained in fact his sole judges; for it was by their solemn oath of his innocence or his guilt that he had to stand or fall.

The English Society

The blood-bond gave both its military and social form to Old English society. Kinsmen fought side by side in the hour of battle and the feelings of honour and discipline were drawn from the common duty of every man in each little group of warriors to his house. And as they fought side by side on the field, so they dwelled side by side on the soil. Harling abode by Harling, and Billing by Billing; and each "wick" or "ham" or "stead" or "tun" took its name from the kinsmen who dwelt together in it. The home or "ham" of the Billings would be Billingham, and the "tun" or town of the Harlings would be Harlington. But in

such settlements, the tie of blood was widened into the larger tie of land. Land with the German race seems everywhere to have been the accompaniment of full freedom. The freeman was strictly the freeholder, and the exercise of his full rights as a free member of the community to which he belonged was inseparable from the possession of his "holding." The landless man ceased for all practical purposes to be free, though he was no man's slave. In the very earliest glimpse we get of the German race we see them a race of land-holders and land-tillers. Tacitus, the first Roman who looked closely at these destined conquerors of Rome, found them a nation of farmers, pasturing on the forest glades around their villages, and ploughing their village fields. A feature which at once struck him as parting them from the civilized world to which he himself belonged was their hatred of cities and their love even within their little settlements of a jealous independence. "They live apart," he says, "each by himself, as woodside, plain, or fresh spring attracts him." And as each dweller within the settlement was jealous of his own isolation and independence among his fellow-settlers, so each settlement was jealous of its independence among its fellow-settlements. Each little farmer-commonwealth was girt in by its own border or "mark," a belt of forest or waste or fen which parted it from its fellow-villages, a ring of common ground which none of its settlers might take for his own, but which served as a death-ground where criminals met their doom, and was held to be the special dwelling-place of the nixie and the will-o'-the-wisp. If a stranger came through this wood or over this waste, custom bade him blow his horn as he came, for if he stole through secretly he was taken for a foe, and any man might lawfully slay him. Within the village we find from the first a marked social difference between two orders of its indwellers. The bulk of its homesteads were those of its freemen or "ceorls"; but amongst these were the larger homes of "eorls," or men distinguished among their fellows by noble blood, who were held in an hereditary reverence, and from whom the "ealdormen" of the village were chosen as leaders in war-time or rulers in time of peace. But the choice was a purely voluntary one, and the man of noble blood enjoyed no legal privilege above his fellows. The actual sovereignty within the settlement resided in the body of its freemen. Their homesteads clustered round a moot-hill, or round a sacred tree, where the whole community met to administer its own justice and to frame its own laws. Here the field was passed from man to man by the delivery of a turf cut from its soil, and the strife of farmer with farmer was settled according to the "customs" of the settlement, as its "elder-men" stated them, and the wrong-doer was judged and his fine assessed by the kinsfolk. Here, too, the "witan," the Wise Men of the village, met to settle questions of peace and war, to judge just judgment, and frame wise laws, as their descendants, the Wise Men of a later England, meet in Parliament at Westminster, to frame laws

and do justice for the great empire which has sprung from this little body of farmer-commonwealths in Sleswick.

The English Religion

The religion of the English was the same as that of the whole German family. Christianity, which had by this time brought about the conversion of the Roman Empire, had not penetrated as yet among the forests of the North. The common god of the English people, as of the whole German race, was Woden, the war-god, the guardian of ways and boundaries, to whom his worshippers attributed the invention of letters, and whom every tribe held to be the first ancestor of its kings. Our own names for the days of the week still recall to us the gods whom our English fathers worshipped in their Sleswick homeland. Wednesday is Woden's-day, as Thursday is the day of Thunder, or, as the Northmen called him, Thor, the god of air and storm and rain; Friday is Frea's-day, the god of peace and joy and fruitfulness, whose emblems, borne aloft by dancing maidens, brought increase to every field and stall they visited. Saturday commemorates an obscure god Soetere; Tuesday the Dark god, Tiw, to meet whom was death. Eostre, the goddess of the dawn, or of the spring, lends her name to the Christian festival of the Resurrection. Behind these floated the dim shapes of an older mythology, "Wyrd," the death-goddess, whose memory lingered long in the "weird" of northern superstition, or the Shield-Maidens, the "mighty women" who, an old rime tells us, "wrought on the battle-field their toil and hurled the shrilling javelins." Nearer to the popular fancy lay the deities of wood and fell, or the hero-gods of legend and song, "Nicor" the water-sprite who gave us our water-nixies and "Old Nick," "Weland" the forger of mighty shields and sharp-biting swords at a later time in his Berkshire "Weyland's smithy," or Ægil, the hero-archer, whose legend is that of Cloudesly or Tell. A nature worship of this sort lent itself ill to the purposes of a priesthood, and though a priestly class existed it seems at no time to have had much weight in the English society. As every freeman was his own judge and his own legislator, so he was his own house priest; and the common English worship lay in the sacrifice which he offered to the god of his hearth.

Britain

From Sleswick and the shores of the Northern Sea we must pass, before opening our story, to a land which, dear as it is now to Englishmen, had not as yet been trodden by English feet. The island of Britain had for nearly four hundred years been a province of the Empire. A descent of Julius Cæsar revealed it (B.C. 55) to the Roman world, but nearly a century elapsed before the Emperor Claudius attempted its definite conquest. The victories of Julius Agricola (A.D. 78—84) carried the Roman frontier to the Friths of Forth and of Clyde, and the work of Roman civilization followed hard upon the Roman sword. The conquered population was grouped in great cities such as York or Lincoln, cities governed by their own municipal officers, guarded by massive walls, and linked together by a network of magnificent roads, which extended from

one end of the island to the other. Commerce sprang up in ports like that of London; agriculture flourished till Britain became one of the great corn-exporting countries of the world; its mineral resources were explored in the tin mines of Cornwall, the lead mines of Somerset, the iron mines of Northumberland and the Forest of Dean. The wealth of the island grew fast during centuries of unbroken peace, but the evils which were slowly sapping the strength of the Roman Empire at large must have told heavily on the real wealth of the province of Britain. Here, as in Italy or Gaul, the population probably declined as the estates of the landed proprietors grew larger, and the cultivators sank into serfs whose cabins clustered round the luxurious villas of their lords. The mines, if worked by forced labour, must have been a source of endless oppression. Town and country were alike crushed by heavy taxation, while industry was checked by a system of trade guilds which confined each occupation to an hereditary caste. Above all, the purely despotic system of the Roman Government, by crushing all local independence, crushed all local vigour. Men forgot how to fight for their country when they forgot how to govern it.

Such causes of decay were common to every province of the Empire; but there were others that sprang from the peculiar circumstances of Britain itself. The island was weakened by a disunion within, which arose from the partial character of its civilization. It was only in the towns that the conquered Britons became entirely Romanized. The tribes of the rural districts seem to have remained apart, speaking their own tongue, and owning some traditional allegiance to their native chiefs. The use of the Roman language may be taken as marking the progress of Roman civilization, and though Latin had wholly superseded the language of the conquered peoples in Spain or Gaul, its use seems to have been confined in Britain to the inhabitants of the towns. It was this disunion that was revealed by the peculiar nature of the danger which threatened Britain from the North. The Picts were simply Britons who had been sheltered from Roman conquest by the fastnesses of the Highlands, and who were at last roused in their turn to attack by the weakness of the province and the hope of plunder. Their invasions penetrated to the heart of the island. Raids so extensive could hardly have been effected without help from within, and the dim history of the time allows us to see not merely an increase of disunion between the Romanized and un-Romanized population of Britain, but even an alliance between the last and their free kinsfolk, the Picts. The struggles of Britain, however, lingered on till dangers nearer home forced the Empire to recall its legions and leave the province to itself. Ever since the birth of Christ the countries which lay round the Mediterranean Sea, and which then comprehended the whole of the civilized world, had rested in peace beneath the rule of Rome. During four hundred years its frontier had held at bay the

barbarian world without—the Parthian of the Euphrates, the Numidian of the African desert, the German of the Danube or the Rhine. It was this mass of savage barbarism that at last broke in on the Empire at a time when its force was sapped by internal decay. In the Western dominions of Rome the triumph of the invaders was complete. The Franks conquered and colonized Gaul, the West-Goths conquered and colonized Spain, the Vandals founded a kingdom in Africa, the Burgundians encamped in the border-land between Italy and the Rhone, the East-Goths ruled at last in Italy itself.

Britain and the English

It was to defend Italy against the Goths that Rome in 411 recalled her legions from Britain, and though she purposed to send them back again when the danger was over, the moment for their return never came. The province, thus left unaided, seems to have fought bravely against its assailants, and once at least to have driven back the Picts to their mountains in a rising of despair. But the threat of fresh inroads found Britain torn with civil quarrels which made a united resistance impossible, while its Pictish enemies strengthened themselves by a league with marauders from Ireland (Scots as they were then called), whose pirate-boats were harrying the western coast of the island, and with a yet more formidable race of pirates who had long been pillaging along the British Channel. These were the English. We do not know whether it was the pressure of other tribes or the example of their German brethren who were now moving in a general attack on the Empire from their forest homes, or simply the barrenness of their coast, which drove the hunters, farmers, fishermen, of the three English tribes to sea. But the daring spirit of their race already broke out in the secresy and suddenness of their swoop, in the fierceness of their onset, in the careless glee with which they seized either sword or oar. "Foes are they," sang a Roman poet of the time, "fierce beyond other foes, and cunning as they are fierce: the sea is their school of war, and the storm their friend; they are sea-wolves that live on the pillage of the world." To meet the league of Pict, Scot, and Englishman by the forces of the province itself became impossible; and the one course left was to imitate the fatal policy by which the Empire had invited its own doom while striving to avert it, the policy of matching barbarian against barbarian. The rulers of Britain resolved to break the league by detaching the English from it, and to use their new allies against the Pict. By the usual promises of land and pay, a band of English warriors were drawn for this purpose in 449 from Jutland, with their chiefs, Hengest and Horsa, at their head.

Green's account of the early settlements of the English is, perhaps, open to some criticism. It has been suggested that the Jutes of England are not to be identified with the Jutes of Jutland, and that no real distinction is to be drawn between the Angles and the Saxons; for a discussion of these points, see Stevenson, "Asser's Life of Alfred," and Chadwick, "Origin of the English People."

Section II.—The English Conquest, 449—607

449 to 607

[*Authorities.*—There is no contemporary account of the Conquest; our information must be drawn from later sources, of which the chief are Gildas, "Liber Querulus"; Nennius, "Historia Brittonum"; Bede, "Historia Ecclesiastica" (edited Plummer); and the English Chronicle (Rolls Series; or edited Plummer). Among modern works dealing with this period may be mentioned Lappenberg, "Geschichte von England" (translated Thorpe); Ramsay, "Foundations of England"; Chadwick, "Origin of the English People"; Oman, "England Before the Norman Conquest." "The Political History of England" (12 volumes, by various authors) contains, perhaps, the best general narrative of the whole of English History, and a critical bibliography in each volume.]

The English in Thanet

It is with the landing of Hengest and his war-band at Ebbsfleet on the shores of the Isle of Thanet that English history begins. No spot in Britain can be so sacred to Englishmen as that which first felt the tread of English feet. There is little indeed to catch the eye in Ebbsfleet itself, a mere lift of higher ground with a few grey cottages dotted over it, cut off now-a-days from the sea by a reclaimed meadow and a sea-wall. But taken as a whole the scene has a wild beauty of its own. To the right the white curve of Ramsgate cliffs looks down on the crescent of Pegwell Bay; far away to the left, across grey marsh levels, where smoke-wreaths mark the sites of Richborough and Sandwich, rises the dim cliff-line of Deal. Everything in the character of the spot confirms the national tradition which fixed here the first landing-place of our English fathers, for great as the physical changes of the country have been since the fifth century, they have told little on its main features. It is easy to discover in the misty level of the present Minster Marsh what was once a broad inlet of sea parting Thanet from the mainland of Britain, through which the pirate-boats of the first Englishmen came sailing with a fair wind to the little gravel-spit of Ebbsfleet; and Richborough, a fortress whose broken ramparts still rise above the grey flats which have taken the place of this older sea-channel, was the common landing-place of travellers from Gaul. If the war-ships of the English pirates therefore were cruising off the coast at the moment when the bargain with the Britons was concluded, their disembarkation at Ebbsfleet almost beneath the walls of Richborough would be natural enough. But the after-current of events serves to show that the choice of this landing-place was the result of a deliberate design. Between the Briton and his hireling soldiers there could be little mutual confidence. Quarters in Thanet would satisfy the followers of Hengest, who still lay in sight of their fellow-pirates in the Channel, and who felt themselves secured against the treachery which had so often proved fatal to the barbarian by the broad inlet which parted their camp from the mainland. Nor was the choice less satisfactory to the provincial, trembling—

449 to 607

and, as the event proved, justly trembling—lest in his zeal against the Pict he had introduced an even fiercer foe into Britain. His dangerous allies were cooped up in a corner of the land, and parted from it by a sea-channel which was guarded by the strongest fortresses of the coast.

The English Attack

The need of such precautions was soon seen in the disputes which arose as soon as the work for which the mercenaries had been hired was done. The Picts were hardly scattered to the winds in a great battle when danger came from the English themselves. Their numbers rapidly increased as the news of the settlement spread among the pirates of the Channel, and with the increase of their number increased the difficulty of supplying rations and pay. The long dispute which rose over these questions was at last closed by the English with a threat of war. The threat, however, as we have seen, was no easy one to carry out. When the English chieftains gave their voice for war, in 449, the inlet between Thanet and the mainland, traversable only at low water by a long and dangerous ford, and guarded at either mouth by the fortresses of Richborough and Reculver, stretched right across their path. The channels of the Medway and the Cray, with the great circle of the Weald, furnished further lines of defence in the rear, while around lay a population of soldiers, the military colonists of the coast, pledged by terms of feudal service to guard the shore against the barbarian. Great, however, as these difficulties were, they yielded before the suddenness of Hengest's onset. The harbour seems to have been crossed, the coast-road to London seized, before any force could be collected to oppose the English; and it was only when they passed the vast potteries whose refuse still strews the mudbanks of the Medway that they found the river passage secured. The guarded walls of Rochester probably forced them to turn southwards along the ridge of low hills which forms the bound of its river-valley. Their march led them through a district full of memories of a past which had even then faded from the minds of men; for hill and hill-slope were the necropolis of a vanished race, and scattered among the boulders that strewed the ground rose the cromlechs and huge barrows of the dead. One such mighty relic survives in the monument now called Kits' Coty House, the close as it seems of a great sepulchral avenue which linked the graves around it with the grave-ground of Addington. The view of their first battle-field broke on the English warriors from a steep knoll on which the grey weather-beaten stones of this monument are reared, and a lane which still leads down from it through peaceful homesteads guided them across the river-valley to a little village named Aylesford, which marked the ford across the Medway. The chronicle of the conquest tells nothing of the rush that must have carried the ford, or of the fight that went struggling up through the village. It tells only that Horsa fell in the moment of victory; and the flint-heap of Horsted, which has long preserved his name, and was held in after time to mark his

grave, is thus the earliest of those monuments of English valour of which Westminster is the last and noblest shrine. 449 to 607

The victory of Aylesford did more than give East Kent to the English; it struck the key-note of the whole English conquest of Britain. The massacre which followed the battle indicated at once the merciless nature of the struggle which had begun. While the wealthier Kentish landowners fled in panic over sea, the poorer Britons took refuge in hill and forest till hunger drove them from their lurking-places to be cut down or enslaved by their conquerors. It was in vain that some sought shelter within the walls of their churches: for the rage of the English seems to have burned fiercest against the clergy. The priests were slain at the altar, the churches fired, the peasants driven by the flames to fling themselves on a ring of pitiless steel. It is a picture such as this which distinguishes the conquest of Britain from that of the other provinces of Rome. The conquest of Gaul by the Frank, or of Italy by the Lombard, proved little more than a forcible settlement of the one conqueror or the other among tributary subjects who were destined in a long course of ages to absorb their conquerors. French is the tongue not of the Frank, but of the Gaul whom he overcame; and the fair hair of the Lombard is now all but unknown in Lombardy. But the English conquest was a sheer dispossession and slaughter of the people whom the English conquered. In all the world-wide struggle between Rome and the German invaders no land was so stubbornly fought for or so hardly won. The conquest of Britain was indeed only partly wrought out after two centuries of bitter warfare. But it was just through the long and merciless nature of the struggle that of all the German conquests this proved the most thorough and complete. At its close Britain had become England, a land that is, not of Britons, but of Englishmen. It is possible that a few of the vanquished people may have lingered as slaves round the homesteads of their English conquerors, and a few of their household words (if these were not brought in at a later time) mingled oddly with the English tongue. But doubtful exceptions such as these leave the main facts untouched. When the steady progress of English conquest was stayed for a while by civil wars a century and a half after Aylesford, the Briton had disappeared from the greater part of the land which had been his own, and the tongue, the religion, the laws of his English conqueror reigned without a rival from Essex to the Severn, and from the British Channel to the Firth of Forth.

Extermination of the Britons

Aylesford, however, was but the first step in this career of conquest. How stubborn the contest was may be seen from the fact that it took sixty years to complete the conquest of Southern Britain alone. Kent passed slowly under the rule of Hengest. After a second defeat at the passage of the Cray, the Britons "forsook Kent-land and fled with much fear to London"; and, six years after Aylesford, the castles of the shore, Richborough, Dover, and Lymne, fell at last into English hands. But the greed

The Conquest of Southern Britain

449 to 607 of plunder drew fresh war-bands from the German coast. New invaders, drawn from among the Saxons, the southern tribe of the English confederacy, were seen in 477, some twenty years 477 later, pushing slowly along the strip of land which lay westward of Kent between the Weald and the sea. Nowhere has the physical aspect of the country been more utterly changed. The vast sheet of scrub, woodland, and waste which then bore the name of the Andredswold stretched for more than a hundred miles from the borders of Kent to the Hampshire Downs, extending northward almost to the Thames, and leaving only a thin strip of coast along its southern edge. This coast was guarded by a great fortress, which occupied the spot now called Pevensey, the future landing-place of the Norman Conqueror. The fall of this fortress of Anderida in 491 established the kingdom of the South-Saxons; "Ælla and Cissa," ran the pitiless record of the conquerors, "beset Anderida, and slew all that were therein, nor was there afterwards one Briton left." But the followers of Hengest or of Ælla had touched little more than the coast; and the true conquest of Southern Britain was reserved for a fresh band of Saxons, who struggled under Cerdic and Cymric up from Southampton Water in 495 to the great downs where Winchester offered so rich a prize. Five thousand Britons fell in a fight which opened the country to these invaders, and a fresh victory at Charford in 519 set the crown of the West-Saxons on the head of Cerdic.

Gildas We know little of the incidents of these conquests; nor do we know why at this juncture they seem to have been suddenly interrupted. But it is certain that a victory of the Britons at Mount Badon in the year 520 not only checked the progress of the West-Saxons, but was followed by a general pause in the English advance. For nearly half a century the great belt of woodland which then curved round from Dorset to the valley of the Thames seems to have barred the way of the assailants. From London to the Firth of Forth, from the Fens to St. David's Head, the country still remained unconquered, and there was little in the long breathing-space to herald that second outbreak of the English race which really made Britain England. In the silence of this interval of rest we listen to the monotonous plaint of Gildas, the one writer whom Britain has left us, with a strange disappointment. Gildas had seen the English invasion, and it is to him we owe our knowledge of the English Conquest of Kent. But we look in vain to his book for any account of the life or settlement of the English conquerors. Across the border of the new England that was growing up along the southern shores of Britain, Gildas gives us but a glimpse—doubtless he had but a glimpse himself—of forsaken walls, of shrines polluted by heathen impiety. His silence and his ignorance mark the character of the struggle. No British neck had as yet bowed before the English invader, no British pen was to record his conquest. A century after their landing the English are still known to their British foes only as "barbarians," "wolves,"

BRITAIN
in the midst of
THE ENGLISH CONQUEST
English Miles
0 20 40 60 80
Angles
Saxons
Jutes
Britons
6 4 2 0 2
56
54
Picts
Alcluyd
Edinburgh
Lindisfarne
Bamborough
R. Tweed
BERNICIA
STRATH CLYDE
Heavenfield
R. Tees
Dægsastan
Mevania
DEIRA
YORK
Godmundingham
Loidis
Elmet
Gainas
Mona or Anglesey

NORTH
WALES
Ceredigion
Magesætas
Worcester
Warwick
Bedford
Dyfed
Gwent
Gloucester
Cirencester
Aylesbury
Colchester
ESSEX
Dorchester
Cricklade
M.Sex
LONDON
Malmesbury
Thames
Caerleon on Usk
Morganwg
Aust
Orlebury
Bradford
Frome
WESSEX
Surrey
KENT
East
Sumorsætas
Wilsætas
WINCHESTER
SUSSEX
Defnsætas
WEST
WALES
Dorsætas
Badbury
Chichester
Andredesceaster
Selsey
Wight
Middle Angles
SOUTH
EAST
ANGLIA
Northfolk
Southfolk
Deorham
Lof Thanet
52
50
6
4
0
Longitude West 2° of Greenwich

"dogs," "whelps from the kennel of barbarism," "hateful to God and man." Their victories seemed victories of the powers of evil, chastisements of a divine justice for national sin. Their ravage, terrible as it had been, was held to be almost at an end: in another century—so ran old prophecies—their last hold on the land would be shaken off. But of submission to, or even of intercourse with the strangers, there is not a word. Gildas tells us nothing of their fortunes, or of their leaders. 449 to 607

In spite of his silence, however, we may still know something of the way in which the new English society grew up in the conquered country, for the extermination of the Briton was but the prelude to the settlement of his conqueror. What strikes us at once in the new England is, that it was the one purely German nation that rose upon the wreck of Rome. In other lands, in Spain, or Gaul, or Italy, though they were equally conquered by German peoples, religion, social life, administrative order, still remained Roman. In Britain alone Rome died into a vague tradition of the past. The whole organization of government and society disappeared with the people who used it. The villas, the mosaics, the coins which we dig up in our fields are no relics of our English fathers, but of a Roman world which our fathers' sword swept utterly away. Its law, its literature, its manners, its faith, went with it. The new England was a heathen country. The religion of Woden and Thunder triumphed over the religion of Christ. Alone among the German assailants of Rome, the English rejected the faith of the Empire they helped to overthrow. Elsewhere the Christian priesthood served as mediators between the barbarian and the conquered. Here the rage of the conquerors burnt fiercest against the clergy. River and homestead and boundary, the very days of the week, bore the names of the new gods who displaced Christ. But if England seemed for the moment a waste from which all the civilization of the world had fled away, it contained within itself the germs of a nobler life than that which had been destroyed. The base of the new English society was the freeman whom we have seen tilling, judging, or sacrificing for himself in his far-off fatherland by the Northern Sea. However roughly he dealt while the struggle went on with the material civilization of Britain, it was impossible that such a man could be a mere destroyer. War was no sooner over than the warrior settled down into the farmer, and the home of the peasant churl rose beside the heap of goblin-haunted stones that marked the site of the villa he had burnt. The English kinsfolk settled in groups over the conquered country, as the lot fell to each, no longer kinsfolk only but dwellers in the same plot, knit together by their common holding within the same bounds. Each little village-commonwealth lived the same life in Britain as its farmers had lived at home. Each had its moot hill or sacred tree as a centre, its "mark" as a border; each judged by witness of the kinsfolk and made laws in the assembly of its wise men, and chose its own leaders among the "eorls" for peace or war. The English Settlement

548 to 607 — England and the Conquest

In two ways only was this primitive organization of English society affected by its transfer to the soil of Britain. War begat the King. It is probable that the English had hitherto known nothing of kings in their own fatherland, where each small tribe lived under the rule of its own chosen Ealdorman. But in a war such as that which they waged against the Britons it was necessary to find a common leader whom the various tribes engaged in conquering Kent or Wessex might follow, and such a leader soon rose into a higher position than that of a temporary chief. The sons of Hengest became kings in Kent, those of Ælla in Sussex. The West-Saxons have left a record of the solemn election by which they chose Cerdic for their king. Such a choice at once drew the various villages and tribes of each community closer together than of old, while the usage which gave all unoccupied or common ground to the new ruler enabled him to surround himself with a chosen war-band of companions, servants, or "thegns" as they were called, who were rewarded for their service by gifts from it, and who at last became a nobility which superseded the "eorlas" of the original English constitution. And as war begat the King and the military noble, so it all but begat the slave. There had always been a slave class, a class of the unfree, among the English as among all German peoples; but the numbers of this class, if unaffected by the conquest of Britain, were swelled by the wars which soon sprang up among the English conquerors. No rank saved the prisoner taken in battle from the doom of slavery, and slavery itself was often welcomed as saving the prisoner from death. We see this in the story of a noble warrior who had fallen wounded in a fight between two English tribes, and was carried as a bond-slave to the house of a thegn hard by. He declared himself a peasant, but his master penetrated the disguise. "You deserve death," he said, "since all my brothers and kinsfolk fell in the fight," but for his oath's sake he spared his life and sold him to a Frisian at London. The Frisian was probably a merchant, such as those who were carrying English captives at that time to the market-place of Rome. But war was not the only cause of the increase of this slave class. The number of the "unfree" were swelled by debt and crime. Famine drove men to "bend their heads in the evil days for meat"; the debtor unable to discharge his debt flung on the ground the freeman's sword and spear, took up the labourer's mattock, and placed his head as a slave within a master's hands. The criminal whose kinsfolk would not make up his fine became the crime-serf of the plaintiff or the king. Sometimes a father, pressed by need, sold children and wife into bondage. The slave became part of the live-stock of the estate, to be willed away at death with the horse or the ass, whose pedigree was kept as carefully as his own. His children were bondsmen like himself; even the freeman's children by a slave-mother inherited the mother's taint. "Mine is the calf that is born of my cow," ran the English proverb. The cabins of the unfree clustered round the

home of the freeman as they had clustered round the villa of the Roman gentleman; ploughman, shepherd, goatherd, swineherd, oxherd and cowherd, dairymaid, barnman, sower, hayward and woodward, were alike serfs. It was not such a slavery as that we have known in modern times, for stripes and bonds were rare; if the slave were slain, it was by an angry blow, not by the lash. But his lord could slay him if he would; it was but a chattel the less. The slave had no place in the justice-court, no kinsman to claim vengeance for the wrong. If a stranger slew him, his lord claimed the damages; if guilty of wrong-doing, "his skin paid for him" under the lash. If he fled he might be chased like a strayed beast, and flogged to death for his crime, or burned to death if the slave were a woman. 449 to 607

The halt of the English conquerors after the battle of Mount Badon was no very long one, for even while Gildas was writing, the Britons seem to have been driven from the eastern coast by a series of descents whose history is lost. The invaders who thus became masters of the wolds of Lincolnshire, and of the great district which was cut off from the rest of Britain by the Wash and the Fens, were drawn from that tribe of the English confederacy which, as we have seen, bore especially the name of Englishmen, as those of South Britain had been drawn from its Saxon tribe, and those of Kent from its Jutish. On the Wolds they were known as Lindiswaras, in the Fens as Gyrwas; on the coast as North-folk and South-folk, names still preserved to us in the counties where they settled. The district round London, on the other hand, was won and colonized by men of Saxon blood—the Middle-Sexe and East-Sexe or Essex. It may have been the success of these landings on the eastern coast that roused the West-Saxons of the southern coast to a new advance. Their capture of the hill-fort of Old Sarum in 552 threw open the reaches of the Wiltshire Downs; and pushing along the upper valley of Avon to a new battle at Barbury Hill, they swooped at last from their uplands on the rich prey that lay along the Severn. Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, cities which had leagued under their British kings to resist this onset, became the spoil of an English victory at Deorham in 577, and the line of the great western river lay open to the arms of the conquerors. Once the West-Saxons penetrated to the borders of Chester, and Uriconium, a town beside the Wrekin, recently brought again to light, went up in flames. A British poet sings piteously the death-song of Uriconium, "the white town in the valley," the town of white stone gleaming among the green woodland, the hall of its chieftain left "without fire, without light, without songs," the silence broken only by the eagle's scream, the eagle who "has swallowed fresh drink, heart's blood of Kyndylan the fair." The raid, however, was repulsed; and the West-Saxons, who seem to have been turned to the east by the difficulty of forcing the fastnesses of the forest of Arden, penetrated into the valley of the Thames. A The Second English Advance

449 to 607

march of their King Cuthwulf's made them masters in 571 of the districts which now form Oxfordshire and Berkshire; and their advance along the river upon London promised them the foremost place among the conquerors of Britain. But though Wessex was fated in the end to win overlordship over every English people, its time had not come yet; and the leadership of the English race was to fall for nearly a century into the hands of a tribe of invaders whose fortunes we have now to follow.

Conquest of Mid-Britain and the North

Rivers were the natural inlets by which the Northern pirates everywhere made their way into the heart of Europe. In Britain the fortress of London barred their way along the Thames from its mouth, and drove them, as we have seen, to an advance along the southern coast and over the downs of Wiltshire, before reaching its upper waters. But the rivers which united in the estuary of the Humber led like open highways into the heart of Britain, and it was by this inlet that the great mass of the invaders penetrated into the interior of the island. Like the invaders of the eastern coast, they were of the English tribe from Sleswick. One body, turned southward by the forest of Elmet, which covered the district around Leeds, followed the course of the Trent. Those who occupied the wooded country between the Trent and the Humber took, from their position, the name of Southumbrians. A second division, advancing along the curve of the former river, and creeping down the line of its tributary, the Soar, till they reached Leicester, became known as the Middle-English. The head waters of the Trent were the seat of those invaders who penetrated furthest to the west, and camped round Lichfield and Repton. This country became the border-land between Englishmen and Britons, and the settlers bore the name of "Mercians," men, that is, of the March or border. We know hardly anything of this conquest of Mid-Britain, and little more of the conquest of the North. Under the Romans political power had centred in the vast district between the Humber and the Forth. York had been the capital of Britain and the seat of the Roman prefect: and the bulk of the garrison maintained in the island lay cantoned along the Roman wall. Signs of wealth and prosperity appeared everywhere; cities rose beneath the shelter of the Roman camps; villas of British landowners studded the vale of the Ouse and the far-off uplands of the Tweed, where the shepherd trusted for security against Pictish marauders to the terror of the Roman name. This district was assailed at once from the north and from the south. A part of the invading force which entered the Humber marched over the Yorkshire wolds to found a kingdom, which was known as that of the Deiri, in the fens of Holderness and on the chalk downs eastward of York. Ida and the men of fifty keels which followed him reared, in 547, the capital of a more northerly kingdom, that of Bernicia, on the rock of Bamborough, and won their way slowly along the coast against a stubborn resistance which formed the theme of British songs.

Strife between these two kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia long hindered the full conquest of Northern Britain. They were at last united under Æthelfrith, a king of greater vigour than any we have seen yet in English history, and from their union was formed a new kingdom, the kingdom of Northumbria. Under Æthelfrith the work of conquest went on with wonderful rapidity. In 603 the forces of the Northern Britons were annihilated in a great battle at Dægsastan, and the rule of Northumbria established from the Humber to the Forth. Along the west of Britain there stretched the unconquered kingdoms of Strathclyde and Cumbria, which extended from the river Clyde to the Dee, and the smaller British states which occupied what we now call Wales. Chester formed the link between these two bodies: and it was Chester that Æthelfrith chose in 607 for his next point of attack. Hard by the city two thousand monks were gathered in the monastery of Bangor, and after imploring in a three days' fast the help of Heaven for their country, a crowd of these ascetics followed the British army to the field. Æthelfrith watched the wild gestures and outstretched arms of the strange company as it stood apart, intent upon prayer, and took the monks for enchanters. "Bear they arms or no," said the king, "they war against us when they cry against us to their God," and in the surprise and rout which followed the monks were the first to fall.

449 to 607 — Æthelfrith

607

The account given in the text of the English Conquest is rather picturesque than historical. In the absence of anything like a contemporary account of the invasion, much must necessarily be left to conjecture, and two distinct theories have been formed as to the character and course of the invasion. The first is that put forward in the text; the second suggests that the invading host split up after the battle of Mount Badon. Chadwick suggests that Wessex was conquered from the east and not from the south at all. It may be added that the historical existence of the supposed leaders of the English has been called in question. Hengest would appear actually to have existed, but Cerdic, for example, may well be a mythical character. Chadwick has given reasons for thinking that the English had kings prior to the conquest of Britain, and the idea that the war was a war of extermination has also been attacked, as has the assertion that Roman influences were entirely destroyed. For the various opinions which have been put forward, see Oman, "England before the Norman Conquest"; Hodgkin, "Political History of England"; Chadwick, "Origin of the English People"; and Coote, "The Romans of Britain."

Section III.—The Northumbrian Kingdom, 607—685

607 to 685

[*Authorities.*—The chief authority for this period is Bede, "Historia Ecclesiastica." Eddius, "Life of Wilfrid" (Rolls Series, "Historians of the Church of York"), is useful as a supplement to Bede. Cædmon has been edited by Grein and Wülker, "Bibliotek der Angelsächischen Poesie." Among modern authorities may be mentioned, in addition to those given under the previous section, Stubbs, "Constitutional History of England," and Bright, "Early English Church History."]

Æthelberht

The British kingdoms were now utterly parted from one another. By their victory at Deorham the West-Saxons had cut off the Britons of Devon and Cornwall from the general body of their race. By his victory at Chester and the reduction of Lancashire which followed it, Æthelfrith broke this body again into two several parts. From this time, therefore, the character of the English conquest of Britain changes. It dies down into a warfare against the separate British provinces—West Wales, North Wales, and Cumbria, as they were called—which, though often interrupted, at last found its close in the victories of Edward the First. A far more important change was that which was seen in the attitude of the English conquerors from this time towards each other. Freed from the common pressure of the war against the Britons, their energies turned to combats with one another, to a long struggle for overlordship which was to end in bringing about a real national unity. In this struggle the lead was at once taken by Northumbria, which succeeded under Æthelfrith in establishing its overlordship, or claim to military supremacy and tribute, over the English tribes who were occupying Mid-Britain, the Southumbrians, Middle-English, and Mercians; and probably over the Lindiswaras of Lincolnshire. But a powerful rival appeared at this moment in Kent. The kingdom of the Jutes rose suddenly into greatness under a king called Æthelberht, who established his supremacy over the Saxons of Middlesex and Essex, as well as over the English of East-Anglia as far north as the Wash; and drove back the West-Saxons, when, after an interval of civil feuds, they began again their advance along the Thames and marched upon London.

Landing of Augustine

The inevitable struggle between Kent and Northumbria was averted by the sudden death of Æthelfrith. Marching in 617 against Rædwald, king of East-Anglia, who had sheltered Eadwine, an exile from the Northumbrian kingdom, he perished in a defeat at the river Idle. Æthelberht, on the other hand, showed less zeal for the widening of his overlordship than for a renewal of that intercourse of Britain with the Continent which had been broken off by the conquests of the English. His marriage with Bercta, the daughter of the Frankish king Charibert of Paris, created a fresh tie between Kent and Gaul. But the union had far more important results than those of which Æthelberht may have dreamed. Bercta, like her Frankish kinsfolk, was a Christian. A

Christian bishop accompanied her from Gaul to Canterbury, the royal city of the kingdom of Kent; and a ruined Christian church, the Church of St. Martin, was given them for their worship. The marriage of Bercta was an opportunity which was at once seized by the bishop who at this time occupied the Roman See, and who is justly known as Gregory the Great. Years ago, when but a young deacon, Gregory had noted the white bodies, the fair faces, the golden hair of some youths who stood bound in the market-place of Rome. "From what country do these slaves come?" he asked the traders who brought them. "They are English, Angles!" the slave-dealers answered. The deacon's pity veiled itself in poetic humour. "Not Angles, but angels," he said, "with faces so angel-like! From what country come they?" "They come," said the merchants, "from Deira." "De irâ!" was the untranslateable reply; "aye, plucked from God's ire, and called to Christ's mercy! And what is the name of their king?" "Ælla," they told him; and Gregory seized on the word as of good omen. "Alle-luia shall be sung there," he cried, and passed on, musing how the angel-faces should be brought to sing it. Years went by, and the deacon had become Bishop of Rome, when Bercta's marriage gave him the opening he sought. He at once sent a Roman abbot, Augustine, at the head of a band of monks, to preach the Gospel to the English people. The missionaries landed in 597 on the very spot where Hengest had landed more than a century before in the Isle of Thanet; and the king received them sitting in the open air, on the chalk-down above Minster, where the eye now-a-days catches miles away over the marshes the dim tower of Canterbury. He listened to the long sermon as the interpreters whom Augustine had brought with him from Gaul translated it. "Your words are fair," Æthelberht replied at last, with English good sense, "but they are new and of doubtful meaning"; for himself, he said, he refused to forsake the gods of his fathers, but he promised shelter and protection to the strangers. The band of monks entered Canterbury bearing before them a silver cross with a picture of Christ, and singing in concert the strains of the litany of their Church. "Turn from this city, O Lord," they sang, "Thine anger and wrath, and turn it from Thy holy house, for we have sinned." And then in strange contrast came the jubilant cry of the older Hebrew worship, the cry which Gregory had wrested in prophetic earnestness from the name of the Yorkshire king in the Roman market-place, "Alleluia!"

597 to 635

It is strange that the spot which witnessed the landing of Hengest should be yet better known as the landing-place of Augustine. But the second landing at Ebbsfleet was in no small measure the reversal and undoing of the first. "Strangers from Rome," was the title with which the missionaries first fronted the English king. The march of the monks as they chaunted their solemn litany was, in one sense, the return of the Roman legions who had retired at

Reunion of England and the Western World

607 to 685 the trumpet-call of Alaric. It was to the tongue and the thought, not of Gregory only, but of such men as his English fathers had slaughtered and driven over sea, that Æthelberht listened in the preaching of Augustine. Canterbury, the earliest royal city of German England, became the centre of Latin influence. The Latin tongue became again one of the tongues of Britain, the language of its worship, its correspondence, its literature. If poetry began at a later day in the English epic of Cædmon, prose took its first shape in the Latin history of Bæda. But more than the tongue of Rome returned with Augustine. Practically his landing renewed the union with the Western world which that of Hengest had destroyed. The new England was admitted into the older commonwealth of nations. The civilization, art, letters, which had fled before the sword of the English Conquest, returned with the Christian faith. The great fabric of the Roman law, indeed, never took root in England, but it is impossible not to recognize the result of the influence of the Roman missionaries in the fact that the codes of customary English law began to be put into writing soon after their arrival.

Eadwine As yet these great results were still distant; a year passed before even Æthelberht yielded, but from the moment of his conversion the new faith advanced rapidly. The Kentish men crowded to baptism in thousands; the under-kings of Essex and East-Anglia received the creed of their overlord. A daughter of the Kentish king carried with her the missionary Paulinus to the Northumbrian court. Northumbria was now fast rising to a power which set all rivalry at defiance. Eadwine, whom we have seen in exile at Rædwald's court, mounted the Northumbrian throne on the fall of his enemy, Æthelfrith, in 617; and asserted, like his predecessor, his lordship over the English of Mid-Britain. The submission of the East-Anglians and the East-Saxons after Æthelberht's death destroyed all dread of opposition from Kent; and the English conquerors of the south, the people of the West-Saxons, alone remained independent. But revolt and slaughter had fatally broken the power of the West-Saxons when the Northumbrians attacked them. A story preserved by Bæda tells something of the fierceness of the struggle which ended in the subjection of the south to the overlordship of Northumbria. Eadwine gave audience in an Easter-court, which he held in his royal city by the river Derwent, to Eumer, an envoy of Wessex, who brought a message from its king. In the midst of the conference the envoy started to his feet, drew a dagger from his robe, and rushed madly on the Northumbrian sovereign. Lilla, one of the king's war-band, threw himself between Eadwine and his assassin; but so furious was the stroke, that even through Lilla's body the dagger still reached its aim. The king, however, recovered from his wound to march on the West-Saxons; he slew and subdued all who had conspired against him, and returned victorious to his own country. The greatness of Northumbria now reached its height. Within his own

dominions, Eadwine displayed a genius for civil government which shows how completely the mere age of conquest had passed away. With him began the English proverb so often applied to after kings: "A woman with her babe might walk scatheless from sea to sea in Eadwine's day." Peaceful communication revived along the deserted highways; the springs by the roadside were marked with stakes, and a cup of brass set beside each for the traveller's refreshment. Some faint traditions of the Roman past may have flung their glory round this new "Empire of the English"; some of its majesty had, at any rate, come back with its long-lost peace. A royal standard of purple and gold floated before Eadwine as he rode through the villages; a feather-tuft attached to a spear, the Roman tufa, preceded him as he walked through the streets. The Northumbrian king was in fact supreme over Britain as no king of English blood had been before. Northward his frontier reached the Forth, and was guarded by a city which bore his name, Edinburgh, Eadwine's burgh, the city of Eadwine. Westward, he was master of Chester, and the fleet he equipped there subdued the isles of Anglesey and Man. South of the Humber he was owned as overlord by the whole English race, save Kent: and Kent bound itself to him by giving him its king's daughter as a wife, a step which probably marked political subordination. 607 to 635

With the Kentish queen came Paulinus, one of Augustine's followers, whose tall stooping form, slender aquiline nose, and black hair falling round a thin worn face, were long remembered in the North; and the wise men of Northumbria gathered to deliberate on the new faith to which Paulinus and his queen soon converted Eadwine. To finer minds its charm lay in the light it threw on the darkness which encompassed men's lives, the darkness of the future as of the past. "So seems the life of man, O king," burst forth an aged Ealdorman, "as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in winter-tide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the icy rainstorm without. The sparrow flies in at one door, and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let us follow it." Coarser argument told on the crowd. "None of your people, Eadwine, have worshipped the gods more busily than I," said Coifi the priest, "yet there are many more favoured and more fortunate. Were these gods good for anything they would help their worshippers." Then leaping on horseback, he hurled his spear into the sacred temple which gave its name to Godmanham on the Derwent, and with the rest of the Witan embraced the religion of the king. Conversion of Northumbria

But the faith of Woden and Thunder was not to fall without a struggle. Even in Kent a reaction against the new creed began with the death of Æthelberht. Rædwald of East-Anglia resolved The Heathen Struggle

607 to 685 to serve Christ and the older gods together: and a pagan and Christian altar fronted one another in the same royal temple. The young kings of the East-Saxons burst into the church where Mellitus, the Bishop of London, was administering the Eucharist to the people, crying, "Give us that white bread you gave to our father Saba," and on the bishop's refusal, drove him from their realm. The tide of reaction was checked for a time by Eadwine's conversion; until Mercia sprang into a sudden greatness as the champion of the heathen gods. Under Æthelfrith and Eadwine Mercia had submitted to the lordship of Northumbria; but its king, Penda, saw in the rally of the old religion a chance of winning back its independence. Alone, however, he was as yet no match for Northumbria. But the war of the English people with the Britons seems at this moment to have died down for a season, and Penda boldly broke through the barrier which had parted the two races till now, and allied himself with the Welsh king, Cadwallon, 633 in an attack on Eadwine. The armies met in 633 at Hatfield, and in the fight which followed Eadwine was defeated and slain. The victory was at once turned to profit by the ambition of Penda, while Northumbria was torn with the strifes which followed Eadwine's fall. Penda united to his own Mercians of the Upper Trent the Middle English of Leicester, the Southumbrians, and the Lindiswaras: and was soon strong enough to tear from the West-Saxons their possessions along the Severn. So thoroughly was the union of these provinces effected, that though some were detached for a time after Penda's death, the name of Mercia from this moment must be generally taken as covering the whole of them. But his work in Middle England gave Northumbria time to rise again under a new king, Oswald. The Welsh had remained encamped in the heart of the North, and Oswald's first fight was with Cadwallon. A small Northumbrian force gathered in 635 under their new king near the Roman Wall, and set up the Cross as their standard. Oswald held it with his own hands till the hollow in which it was to stand was filled in by his soldiers; then throwing himself on his knees, he cried to his army to pray to the 635 living God. Cadwallon fell fighting on the "Heaven's Field," as after times called the field of battle, and for nine years the power of Oswald equalled that of Æthelfrith and Eadwine.

The Irish Church

It was not the Church of Paulinus which nerved Oswald to this struggle for the Cross. Paulinus had fled from Northumbria at Eadwine's fall; and the Roman Church in Kent shrank into inactivity before the heathen reaction. Its place in the conversion of England was taken by missionaries from Ireland. To understand, however, the true meaning of the change, we must remember that before the landing of the English in Britain, the Christian Church comprised every country, save Germany, in Western Europe, as far as Ireland itself. The conquest of Britain by the pagan English thrust a wedge of heathendom into the heart of this great communion, and broke it into two unequal parts. On the

one side lay Italy, Spain, and Gaul, whose churches owned obedience to the See of Rome, on the other the Church of Ireland. But the condition of the two portions of Western Christendom was very different. While the vigour of Christianity in Italy and Gaul and Spain was exhausted in a bare struggle for life, Ireland, which remained unscourged by invaders, drew from its conversion an energy such as it has never known since. Christianity had been received there with a burst of popular enthusiasm, and letters and arts sprang up rapidly in its train. The science and Biblical knowledge which fled from the Continent took refuge in famous schools which made Durrow and Armagh the universities of the West. The new Christian life soon beat too strongly to brook confinement within the bounds of Ireland itself. Patrick, the first missionary of the island, had not been half a century dead when Irish Christianity flung itself with a fiery zeal into battle with the mass of heathenism which was rolling in upon the Christian world. Irish missionaries laboured among the Picts of the Highlands and among the Frisians of the northern seas. An Irish missionary, Columban, founded monasteries in Burgundy and the Apennines. The canton of St. Gall still commemorates in its name another Irish missionary before whom the spirits of flood and fell fled wailing over the waters of the Lake of Constance. For a time it seemed as if the course of the world's history was to be changed, as if the older Celtic race that Roman and German had swept before them had turned to the moral conquest of their conquerors, as if Celtic and not Latin Christianity was to mould the destinies of the Churches of the West. 607 to 685

It was possibly the progress of the Irish Columban at her very doors which roused into new life for a time the energies of Rome, and spurred Gregory to attempt the conversion of the English in Britain. But, as we have seen, the ardour of the Roman mission in Kent soon sank into reaction; and again the Church of Ireland came forward to supply its place. On a low island of barren gneiss-rock off the west coast of Scotland, another Irish refugee, Columba, had raised the famous monastery of Iona. Oswald in youth found refuge within its walls, and on his accession to the throne of Northumbria he called for missionaries from among its monks. The first despatched in answer to his call obtained little success. He declared on his return that among a people so stubborn and barbarous success was impossible. "Was it their stubbornness, or your severity?" asked Aidan, a brother sitting by; "did you forget God's word to give them the milk first and then the meat?" All eyes turned on the speaker as fittest to undertake the abandoned mission, and Aidan sailing at their bidding fixed his episcopal see in the island-peninsula of Lindisfarne. Thence, from the monastery which gave to the spot its after name of Holy Island, preachers poured forth over the heathen realms. Chad went to the conversion of the Mercians, Boisil guided a little troop of missionaries to Melrose, Aidan himself wandered on foot, with Oswald 634 to 642

607 to 685 the king as his interpreter, preaching among the peasants of Yorkshire and Northumbria. The reception of the new faith in the surrounding kingdoms became the mark of their submission to Oswald's overlordship. A preacher from Gaul, Birinus, had already penetrated into pagan Wessex, and in Oswald's presence its king received baptism, and established with his assent the see of Southern Britain in the royal city of Dorchester. Oswald ruled as wide a realm as his predecessor; but for after times the memory of his greatness was lost in the legends of his piety. A new conception of kingship began to blend itself with that of the warlike glory of Æthelfrith, or the wise administration of Eadwine. The moral power which was to reach its height in Ælfred first dawns in the story of Oswald. He wandered, as we have said, as Aidan's interpreter in his long mission journeys. "By reason of his constant habit of praying or giving thanks to the Lord, he was wont wherever he sat to hold his hands upturned on his knees." As he feasted with Bishop Aidan by his side, the thegn, or noble of his war-band, whom he had set to give alms to the poor at his gate, told him of a multitude that still waited fasting without. The king at once bade the untasted meat before him be carried to the poor, and his silver dish be divided piecemeal among them. Aidan seized the royal hand and blessed it. "May this hand," he cried, "never grow old!"

Penda Prisoned, however, as it was by the conversion of Wessex to the central districts of England, heathendom fought desperately for life. Penda was still its rallying point. His long reign in fact was one continuous battle with the Cross. We do not know why he looked idly on while Oswald reasserted his overlordship over Wessex, but the submission of East-Anglia to the Northumbrian rule forced him to a fresh contest. East-Anglia had long before become Christian, but the oddly mingled religion of its first Christian king, Rædwald, died into mere superstition in his successors. Its present king, Sigebert, left his throne for a monastery before the war began, but his people dragged him again from his cell on the news of Penda's invasion, in faith that his presence would bring them the favour of Heaven. The monk-king was set in the fore-front of the battle, but he would bear no weapon but a wand, and his fall was followed by the rout of his army and the
642 submission of his kingdom to the invader. In 642 Oswald marched to deliver East-Anglia from Penda; but in a battle called the battle of the Maserfeld he was overthrown and slain. His body was mutilated, and its limbs set on stakes by the brutal conqueror; but legend told that when all else of Oswald had perished, the "white hand" that Aidan had blest still remained white and uncorrupted. For a few years after his victory at Maserfeld, Penda stood supreme in Britain. Wessex owned his overlordship as it had owned that of Oswald, and its king threw off the Christian faith and married Penda's sister. Northumbria alone, though distracted by civil war between rival claimants for its throne,

refused to yield. Year by year Penda carried his ravages over the north; once he reached even the royal city, the impregnable rock-fortress of Bamborough. Despairing of success in an assault, he pulled down the cottages around, and piling their wood against its walls, fired the mass in a fair wind that drove the flames on the town. "See, Lord, what ill Penda is doing," cried Aidan from his hermit cell in the islet of Farne, as he saw the smoke drifting over the city, and a change of wind—so ran the legend of Northumbria's agony—drove back at the words the flames on those who kindled them. But in spite of Penda's victories, the faith which he had so often struck down revived everywhere around him. Burnt and harried as it was, Northumbria still fought for the Cross. Wessex quietly became Christian again. Penda's own son, whom he had set over the Middle-English, received baptism and teachers from Lindisfarne. At last the missionaries of the new faith appeared fearlessly among the Mercians themselves. Heathen to the last, Penda stood by unheeding if any were willing to hear; hating and despising with a certain grand sincerity of nature "those whom he saw not doing the works of the faith they had received." Northumbrian overlordship again followed in the track of Northumbrian missionaries along the eastern coast, and the old man roused himself for a last stroke at his foes. Oswi had at length been accepted as its sovereign by all Northumbria, and in 655 he met the pagan host in the field of Winwœd by Leeds. It was in vain that the Northumbrians sought to avert Penda's attack by offers of ornaments and costly gifts. "If the pagans will not accept them," Oswi cried at last, "let us offer them to One that will"; and he vowed that if successful he would dedicate his daughter to God, and endow twelve monasteries in his realm. Victory at last declared for the faith of Christ. The river over which the Mercians fled was swollen with a great rain; it swept away the fragments of the heathen host, and the cause of the older gods was lost for ever.

607 to 685

655

The terrible struggle between heathendom and Christianity was followed by a long and profound peace. For three years after the battle of Winwœd Mercia was governed by Northumbrian thegns in Oswi's name: and though a general rising of the people threw off their yoke, and set Penda's son Wulfere on its throne, it still owned the Northumbrian overlordship. Its heathendom was dead with Penda. "Being thus freed," Bæda tells us, "the Mercians with their king rejoiced to serve the true King, Christ." Its three provinces, the earlier Mercia, the Middle-English, and the Lindiswaras, were united in the bishopric of Ceadda, the St. Chad to whom Lichfield is still dedicated. Ceadda was a monk of Lindisfarne, so simple and lowly in temper that he travelled on foot on his long mission journeys, till Archbishop Theodore with his own hands lifted him on horseback. The old Celtic poetry breaks out in his death-legend, as it tells us how voices of singers singing sweetly descended from heaven to the little cell beside St. Mary's

Oswi 642 to 670

687 to 885

Church where the bishop lay dying. Then "the same song ascended from the roof again, and returned heavenward by the way that it came." It was the soul of his brother, the missionary Cedd, come with a choir of angels to solace the last hours of Ceadda. In Northumbria the work of his fellow missionaries has almost been lost in the glory of Cuthbert. No story better lights up for us the new religious life of the time than the story of this Apostle of the Lowlands. It carries us at its outset into northern Northumbria, the older Bernicia, the country of the Teviot and the Tweed. Born on the southern edge of the Lammermoor, Cuthbert found shelter at eight years old in a widow's house in the little village of Wrangholm. Already in youth there was a poetic sensibility beneath the robust frame of the boy which caught even in the chance word of a game a call to higher things. Later on, a traveller coming in his white mantle over the hillside, and stopping his horse to tend Cuthbert's injured knee, seemed to him an angel. The boy's shepherd life carried him to the bleak upland, still famous as a sheepwalk, though the scant herbage scarce veils the whinstone rock, and there meteors plunging into the night became to him a company of angelic spirits, carrying the soul of Bishop Aidan heavenward. Slowly Cuthbert's longings settled into a resolute will towards a religious life, and he made his way at last to a group of log-shanties in the midst of untilled solitudes, where a few Irish monks from Lindisfarne had settled in the mission-station of Melrose. To-day the land is a land of poetry and romance. Cheviot and Lammermoor, Ettrick and Teviotdale, Yarrow and Annan-water, are musical with old ballads and border minstrelsy. Agriculture has chosen its valleys for her favourite seat, and drainage and steam-power have turned sedgy marshes into farm and meadow. But to see the Lowlands as they were in Cuthbert's day we must sweep meadow and farm away again, and replace them by vast solitudes, dotted here and there with clusters of wooden hovels, and crossed by boggy tracks, over which travellers rode spear in hand and eye kept cautiously about them. The Northumbrian peasantry among whom he journeyed were for the most part Christians only in name. With Teutonic indifference, they yielded to their thegns in nominally accepting the new Christianity as these had yielded to the king. But they retained their old superstitions side by side with the new worship; plague or mishap drove them back to a reliance on their heathen charms and amulets; and if trouble befell the Christian preachers who came settling among them, they took it as proof of the wrath of the older gods. When some log-rafts which were floating down the Tyne for the construction of an abbey at its mouth drifted with the monks who were at work on them out to sea, the rustic bystanders shouted, "Let nobody pray for them; let nobody pity these men, who have taken away from us our old worship; and how their new-fangled customs are to be kept nobody knows." On foot, on horseback, Cuthbert wandered among listeners such

as these, choosing above all the remoter mountain villages from whose roughness and poverty other teachers turned aside. Unlike his Irish comrades, he needed no interpreter as he passed from village to village; the frugal, long-headed Northumbrians listened willingly to one who was himself a peasant of the Lowlands, and who had caught the rough Northumbrian burr along the banks of the Leader. His patience, his humorous good sense, the sweetness of his look, told for him, and not less the stout vigorous frame which fitted the peasant-preacher for the hard life he had chosen. "Never did man die of hunger who served God faithfully," he would say, when nightfall found them supperless in the waste. "Look at the eagle overhead! God can feed us through him if He will"—and once at least he owed his meal to a fish that the scared bird let fall. A snowstorm drove his boat on the coast of Fife. "The snow closes the road along the shore," mourned his comrades; "the storm bars our way over sea." "There is still the way of heaven that lies open," said Cuthbert. 607 to 685

While missionaries were thus labouring among its peasantry, Northumbria saw the rise of a host of monasteries, not bound indeed by the strict ties of the Benedictine rule, but gathered on the loose Celtic model of the family or the clan round some noble and wealthy person who sought devotional retirement.

The most notable and wealthy of these houses was that of Streonoshalh, where Hild, a woman of royal race, reared her abbey on the summit of the dark cliffs of Whitby, looking out over the Northern Sea. Whitby became the Westminster of the Northumbrian kings; within its walls stood the tombs of Eadwine and of Oswi, with nobles and queens grouped around them. Hild was herself a Northumbrian Deborah, whose counsel was sought even by bishops and kings; and the double monastery over which she ruled became a seminary of bishops and priests. The sainted John of Beverley was among her scholars. But the name which really throws glory over Whitby is the name of a cowherd from whose lips during the reign of Oswi flowed the first great English song. Though well advanced in years, Cædmon had learnt nothing of the art of verse, the alliterative jingle so common among his fellows, "wherefore being sometimes at feasts, when all agreed for glee's sake to sing in turn, he no sooner saw the harp come towards him than he rose from the board and turned homewards. Once when he had done thus, and gone from the feast to the stable where he had that night charge of the cattle, there appeared to him in his sleep One who said, greeting him by name, 'Sing, Cædmon, some song to Me.' 'I cannot sing,' he answered; 'for this cause left I the feast and came hither.' He who talked with him answered, 'However that be, you shall sing to Me.' 'What shall I sing?' rejoined Cædmon. 'The beginning of created things,' replied He. In the morning the cowherd stood before Hild and told his dream. Abbess and brethren alike concluded 'that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by the Lord.' They Cædmon 664

607 to 685

translated for Cædmon a passage in Holy Writ, 'bidding him, if he could, put the same into verse.' The next morning he gave it them composed in excellent verse, whereon the abbess, understanding the divine grace in the man, bade him quit the secular habit and take on him the monastic life." Piece by piece the sacred story was thus thrown into Cædmon's poem. "He sang of the creation of the world, of the origin of man, and of all the history of Israel; of their departure from Egypt and entering into the Promised Land; of the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of Christ, and of His ascension; of the terror of future judgment, the horror of hell-pangs, and the joys of heaven."

English song

To men of that day this sudden burst of song seemed a thing necessarily divine. "Others after him strove to compose religious poems, but none could vie with him, for he learnt not the art of poetry from men, nor of men, but from God." It was not that any revolution had been wrought by Cædmon in the outer form of English song, as it had grown out of the stormy life of the pirates of the sea. The war-song still remained the true type of English verse, a verse without art or conscious development or the delight that springs from reflection, powerful without beauty, obscured by harsh metaphors and involved construction, but eminently the verse of warriors, the brief passionate expression of brief passionate emotions. Image after image, phrase after phrase, in these early poems, starts out vivid, harsh, and emphatic. The very metre is rough with a sort of self-violence and repression; the verses fall like sword-strokes in the thick of battle. Hard toilers, fierce fighters, with huge appetites whether for meat or the ale-bowl, the one breath of poetry that quickened the animal life of the first Englishman was the poetry of war. But the faith of Christ brought in, as we have seen, new realms of fancy. The legends of the heavenly light, Bæda's story of "The Sparrow," show the side of English temperament to which Christianity appealed—its sense of the vague, vast mystery of the world and of man, its dreamy revolt against the narrow bounds of experience and life. It was this new poetic world which combined with the old in the epic of Cædmon. In the song of the Whitby cowherd the vagueness and daring of the Teutonic imagination float out beyond the limits of the Hebrew story to a "swart hell without light and full of flame," swept only at dawn by the icy east wind, on whose floor lie bound the apostate angels. The human energy of the German race, its sense of the might of individual manhood, transformed in Cædmon's verse the Hebrew Tempter into a rebel Satan, disdainful of vassalage to God. "I may be a God as He," Satan cries amidst his torments. "Evil it seems to me to cringe to Him for any good." Even in this terrible outburst of the fallen spirit, we catch the new pathetic note which the Northern melancholy was to give to our poetry. "This is to me the chief of sorrow, that Adam, wrought of earth, should hold my strong seat—should joy in our torment. Oh, that for one winter's space I had power with

my hands, then with this host I—but around me lie the iron bonds, and this chain galls me." On the other hand, the enthusiasm for the Christian God, faith in whom had been bought so dearly by years of desperate struggle, breaks out in long rolls of sonorous epithets of praise and adoration. The temper of Cædmon brings him near to the earlier fire and passion of the Hebrew, as the history of his time brought him near to the old Bible history, with its fights and wanderings. "The wolves sing their horrid evensong; the fowls of war, greedy of battle, dewy feathered, scream around the host of Pharaoh," as wolf howled and eagle screamed round the host of Penda. Everywhere Cædmon is a type of the new grandeur, depth, and fervour of tone which the German race was to give to the religion of the East. 607 to 685

But even while Cædmon was singing, the Christian Church of Northumbria was torn in two by a strife, whose issue was decided in the same abbey of Whitby where the cowherd dwelt. The labour of Aidan, the victories of Oswald and Oswi, seemed to have annexed England to the Irish Church. The monks of Lindisfarne, or of the new religious houses whose foundation followed that of Lindisfarne, looked for their ecclesiastical tradition, not to Rome, but to Ireland; and quoted for their guidance the instructions, not of Gregory, but of Columba. Whatever claims of supremacy over the whole English Church might be pressed by the see of Canterbury, the real metropolitan of the Church as it existed in the North of England was the Abbot of Iona. But Rome was already moving to regain the ground she had lost, and her efforts were seconded by those of two men whose love of Rome mounted to a passionate fanaticism. The life of Wilfrith of York was a mere series of flights to Rome and returns to England, of wonderful successes in pleading the right of Rome to the obedience of the Church of Northumbria, and of as wonderful defeats. Benedict Biscop worked towards the same end in a quieter fashion, coming backwards and forwards across sea with books and relics and cunning masons and painters to rear a great church and monastery at Wearmouth, whose brethren owned obedience to the Roman See. The strife between the two parties rose so high at last that Oswi was prevailed upon to summon in 664 a great council at Whitby, where the future ecclesiastical allegiance of England should be decided. The points actually contested were trivial enough. Colman, Aidan's successor at Holy Island, pleaded for the Irish fashion of the tonsure, and for the Irish time of keeping Easter: Wilfrith pleaded for the Roman. The one disputant appealed to the authority of Columba, the other to that of St. Peter. "You own," cried the puzzled king at last to Colman, "that Christ gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven—has He given such power to Columba?" The Bishop could but answer "No." "Then will I rather obey the porter of heaven," said Oswi, "lest when I reach its gates he who has the keys in his keeping turn his back on me, and there be none to open." The Synod of Whitby

607 to 685 importance of Oswi's judgment was never doubted at Lindisfarne, where Colman, followed by the whole of the Irish-born brethren, and thirty of their English fellows, forsook the see of St. Aidan, and sailed away to Iona. Trivial, in fact, as were the actual points of difference which severed the Roman Church from the Irish, the question to which communion Northumbria should belong was of immense moment to the after fortunes of England. Had the Church of Aidan finally won, the later ecclesiastical history of England would probably have resembled that of Ireland. Devoid of that power of organization which was the strength of the Roman Church, the Celtic Church in its own Irish home took the clan system of the country as the basis of church government. Tribal quarrels and ecclesiastical controversies became inextricably confounded; and the clergy, robbed of all really spiritual influence, contributed no element save that of disorder to the state. Hundreds of wandering bishops, a vast religious authority wielded by hereditary chieftains, the dissociation of piety from morality, the absence of those larger and more humanizing influences which contact with a wider world alone can give, this is the picture which the Irish Church of later times presents to us. It was from such a chaos as this that England was saved by the victory of Rome in the Synod of Whitby.

Theodore 668 to 690 The Church of England, as we know it to-day, is the work, so far as its outer form is concerned, of a Greek monk, Theodore of Tarsus, whom Rome in 668 despatched after her victory at Whitby to secure England to her sway, as Archbishop of Canterbury. Theodore's work was determined in its main outlines by the previous history of the English people. The conquest of the Continent had been wrought either by races such as the Goths, which were already Christian, or by heathens like the Franks, who bowed to the Christian faith of the nations they conquered. To this oneness of religion between the German invaders of the Empire and their Roman subjects was owing the preservation of all that survived of the Roman world. The Church everywhere remained untouched. The Christian bishop became the defender of the conquered Italian or Gaul against his Gothic and Lombard conqueror, the mediator between the German and his subjects, the one bulwark against barbaric violence and oppression. To the barbarian, on the other hand, he was the representative of all that was venerable in the past, the living record of law, of letters, and of art. But in Britain the priesthood and the people had been exterminated together. When Theodore came to organize the Church of England, the very memory of the older Christian Church which existed in Roman Britain had passed away. The first Christian missionaries, strangers in a heathen land, attached themselves necessarily to the courts of the kings, who were their first converts, and whose conversion was generally followed by that of their people. The English bishops were thus at first royal chaplains, and their diocese was naturally nothing but the king-

dom. Realms which are all but forgotten are thus commemorated in the limits of existing sees. That of Rochester represented till of late an obscure kingdom of West Kent, and the frontier of the original kingdom of Mercia may be recovered by following the map of the ancient bishopric of Lichfield. Theodore's first work was to add many new sees to the old ones; his second was to group all of them round the one centre of Canterbury. All ties between England and the Irish Church were roughly broken. Lindisfarne sank into obscurity with the flight of Colman and his monks. The new prelates, gathered in synod after synod, acknowledged the authority of their one primate. The organization of the episcopate was followed by the organization of the parish system. The loose system of the mission-station, the monastery from which priest and bishop went forth on journey after journey to preach and baptize, as Aidan went forth from Lindisfarne, or Cuthbert from Melrose, naturally disappeared as the land became Christian. The missionaries became settled clergy. The holding of the English noble or landowner became the parish, and his chaplain the parish priest, as the king's chaplain had become the bishop, and the kingdom his diocese. A source of permanent endowment for the clergy was found at a later time in the revival of the Jewish system of tithes, and in the annual gift to Church purposes of a tenth of the produce of the soil; while discipline within the Church itself was provided for by an elaborate code of sin and penance, in which the principle of compensation, which lay at the root of Teutonic legislation, crept into the relations between God and the soul. 607 to 685

Mercia, under Wulfhere

In his work of organization, in his increase of bishoprics, in his arrangement of dioceses, and the way in which he grouped them round the see of Canterbury, in his national synods and ecclesiastical canons, Theodore was unconsciously doing a political work. The old divisions of kingdoms and tribes about him, divisions which had sprung for the most part from mere accidents of the conquest, were fast breaking down. The smaller states were by this time practically absorbed by the three larger ones, and of these three Mercia and Wessex were compelled to bow to the overlordship of Northumbria. The tendency to national unity which was to characterize the new England had thus already declared itself; but the policy of Theodore clothed with a sacred form and surrounded with divine sanctions a unity which as yet rested on no basis but the sword. The single throne of the one Primate at Canterbury accustomed men's minds to the thought of a single throne for their one temporal overlord at York, or, as in later days, at Lichfield or at Winchester. The regular subordination of priest to bishop, of bishop to primate, in the administration of the Church, supplied a mould on which the civil organization of the state quickly shaped itself. Above all, the councils gathered by Theodore were the first of all national gatherings for general legislation. It was at a much later time that the Wise Men of Wessex, or Northumbria, or Mercia, learned to come together in the Witenage-

607 to 685

mote of all England. It was the ecclesiastical synods which by their example led the way to our national parliaments, as it was the canons enacted in such synods which led the way to a national system of law. But if the movement towards national unity was furthered by the centralizing tendencies of the Church, it was furthered as powerfully by the overpowering strength of Northumbria. In arms the kingdom had but a single rival. Mercia, as we have seen, had partially recovered from the absolute subjection in which it was left after Penda's fall by shaking off the government of Oswi's thegns, and by choosing Wulfhere for its king. Wulfhere was a vigorous and active ruler, and the peaceful reign of Oswi left him free to build up again during seventeen years of vigorous rule (659—675), the Mercian overlordship over the tribes of mid-England, which had been lost at Penda's death. For a while he had more than his father's success. Not only did Essex again own his supremacy, but even London fell into Mercian hands. The West-Saxons, who had been long ago stripped of their conquests along the Severn by Penda, were driven across the Thames by Wulfhere, and all their settlements to the north of that river were annexed to the Mercian realm. One result of Wulfhere's conquest remains to the present day; for the old bishop-stool of the West-Saxons had been established by Birinus at what was then the royal city of Dorchester; and it is to its retreat, with the kings of Wessex, to the town which became the new capital of their shrunken realm that we owe the bishopric of Winchester. The supremacy of Mercia soon reached even across the Thames, for Sussex, in its dread of the West-Saxons, found protection in accepting Wulfhere's overlordship, and its king was rewarded by a gift of the two outlying settlements of the Jutes—the Isle of Wight and the lands of the Meonwaras along the Southampton water—which we must suppose had been reduced by Mercian arms.

Progress of Mercia

The industrial progress of the Mercian kingdom went hand in hand with its military advance. The forests of its western border, the marshes of its eastern coast, were being cleared and drained by monastic colonies, whose success shows the hold which Christianity had now gained over its people. Heathenism, indeed, still held its own in the western woodlands, where the miners around Alcester drowned the voice of Bishop Ecgwine of Worcester, as he preached to them, with the din of their hammers. But in spite of their hammers Ecgwine's preaching left one lasting mark behind it. The bishop heard how a swineherd coming out from the forest depths on a sunny glade had seen the Three Fair Women of the old German mythology seated round a mystic bush and singing their unearthly song. In his fancy the Fair Women transformed themselves into a vision of the mother of Christ; and the silent glade soon became the site of an abbey dedicated to her, and of a town which sprang up under its shelter—the Evesham which was to be hallowed in after time by the fall of Earl Simon of Leicester. Wilder even than the western woodland was the desolate fen-country

on the eastern border of the kingdom stretching from the "Holland," the sunk, hollow land of Lincolnshire, to the channel of the Ouse, a wilderness of shallow waters and reedy islets wrapped in its own dark mist-veil and tenanted only by flocks of screaming wild-fowl. Here through the liberality of King Wulfhere rose the abbey of Peterborough. Here, too, Guthlac, a youth of the royal race of Mercia, sought a refuge from the world in the solitudes of Crowland, and so great was the reverence he won, that only two years had passed since his death when the stately Abbey of Crowland rose over his tomb. Earth was brought in boats to form a site; the buildings rested on oaken piles driven into the marsh; a great stone church replaced the hermit's cell; and the toil of the new brotherhood changed the pools around them into fertile meadow-land. The abbey of Ely, as stately as that of Crowland, was founded in the same wild fen country by the Lady Æthelthryth, the wife of King Ecgfrith, who in the year 670 succeeded Oswi on the throne of Northumbria. Her flight from Ecgfrith's pursuit, and the shelter given her by Wulfhere, may have aided to hurry on fresh contests between the two kingdoms. But the aid was hardly needed. His success was long and unvarying enough to fire Wulfhere to a renewal of his father's effort to shake off the Northumbrian overlordship, an overlordship which Mercia had not ceased to acknowledge even though she had freed herself from the yoke of direct subjection. But the vigorous and warlike Ecgfrith was a different foe from the West-Saxon or the Jute, and the defeat of the king of Mercia was so complete that he was glad to purchase peace by giving up to his conquerors the province of the Lindiswaras or Lincolnshire. 607 to 685

Peace would have been purchased more hardly had not Ecgfrith's ambition turned rather to conquests over the Briton than to victories over his fellow Englishmen. The war between Briton and Englishman, which had languished since the battle of Chester, had been revived some twelve years before by an advance of the West-Saxons to the south-west. Unable to save the possessions of Wessex north of the Thames from the grasp of Wulfhere, its king, Cenwalh, sought for compensation in an attack on his Welsh neighbours. A victory at Bradford on the Avon enabled him to overrun the country north of Mendip, which had till then been held by the Britons; and a second campaign in 658, which ended in a victory on the skirts of the great forest that covered Somerset to the east, settled the West-Saxons as conquerors round the sources of the Parret. It was probably the example of the West-Saxons which spurred Ecgfrith to a series of attacks upon his British neighbours in the west which raised Northumbria to its highest pitch of glory. Up to the very moment of his fall indeed the reign of Ecgfrith marks the highest pitch of Northumbrian power. His armies chased the Britons from the kingdom of Cumbria, and made the district of Carlisle English ground. A large part of the conquered country was bestowed upon the see of The Fall of Northumbria

687 to 685 Lindisfarne, which was at this time filled by one whom we have seen before labouring as the Apostle of the Lowlands. After years of mission labour at Melrose, Cuthbert had quitted it for Holy Island, and preached among the moors of Northumberland as he had preached beside the banks of Tweed. He remained there through the great secession which followed on the Synod of Whitby, and became prior of the dwindled company of brethren, now torn with endless disputes, against which his patience and good humour struggled in vain. Worn out at last he fled to a little sandbank, one of a group of islets not far from Ida's fortress of Bamborough, strewn for the most part with kelp and sea-weed, the home of the gull and the seal. In the midst of it rose his hut of rough stones and turf, dug down within deep into the rock, and roofed with logs and straw.

The reverence for his sanctity dragged Cuthbert back in old age to fill the vacant see of Lindisfarne. He entered Carlisle, which the King had bestowed upon the bishopric, at a moment when all Northumbria was waiting for news of a fresh campaign of Ecgfrith's against the Britons in the north. The Firth of Forth had long been the northern limit of Northumbria, and the Withern, the "white stone town," in which a Northumbrian bishop, Trumwine, fixed the seat of his new bishopric of Galloway, was a sign of the subjection of the Britons of that district to the Northumbrian overlordship. Ecgfrith, however, resolved to carry his conquests further to the north, and crossing the Firth of Forth, his army marched in the year 685 into the land of the Picts. A sense of coming ill weighed on Northumbria, and its dread was quickened by a memory of the curses which had been pronounced by the bishops of Ireland on its king, when his navy, setting out a year before from the newly-conquered western coast, swept the Irish shores in a raid which seemed like sacrilege to those who loved the home of Aidan and Columba. As Cuthbert bent over a Roman fountain which still stood unharmed amongst the ruins of Carlisle, the anxious bystanders thought they caught words of ill-omen falling from the old man's lips. "Perhaps," he seemed to murmur, "at this very hour the peril of the fight is over and done." "Watch and pray," he said, when they questioned him on the morrow; "watch and pray." In a few days more a solitary fugitive escaped from the slaughter told that the Picts had turned desperately to bay, as the English army entered Fife; and that Ecgfrith and the flower of his nobles lay, a ghastly ring of corpses, on the far-off moorland of Nechtansmere (685).

Death of Cuthbert To Cuthbert the tidings were tidings of death. His bishopric was soon laid aside, and two months after his return to his island-hermitage the old man lay dying, murmuring to the last words of concord and peace. A signal of his death had been agreed upon, and one of those who stood by ran with a candle in each hand to a place whence the light might be seen by a monk who was looking out from the watchtower of Lindisfarne. As the tiny gleam flashed

over the dark reach of sea, and the watchman hurried with his news into the church, the brethren of Holy Island were singing, as it chanced, the words of the Psalmist: "Thou hast cast us out and scattered us abroad; Thou hast also been displeased; Thou hast shown thy people heavy things; Thou hast given us a drink of deadly wine." The chant was the dirge, not of Cuthbert only, but of his church and his people. Over both hung from that hour the gloom of a seeming failure. Strangers who knew not Iona and Columba entered into the heritage of Aidan and Cuthbert. As the Roman Communion folded England again beneath her wing, men forgot that a Church which passed utterly away had battled with Rome for the spiritual headship of Western Christendom, and that English religion had for a hundred years its centre not at Canterbury, but at Lindisfarne. Nor were men long to remember that from the days of Æthelfrith to the days of Ecgfrith English politics had found their centre at York. But, forgotten or no, Northumbria had done its work. By its missionaries and by its sword it had won England from heathendom to the Christian Church. It had given her a new poetic literature. Its monasteries were already the seat of whatever intellectual life the country possessed. Above all it had been the first to gather together into a loose political unity the various tribes of the English people, and by standing at their head for nearly a century to accustom them to a national life, out of which England, as we have it now, was to spring. 607 to 685

The suggestion in the text that Penda was the conscious champion of paganism is open to question. His wars may have been rather defensive than offensive, which would account for the fact that he offered no opposition to the revival of Northumbria under Oswald and again under Oswi. It is at least certain that he allied with the Christian Cadwallon, and that he permitted his son, Peada, to establish Christianity in a part of Mercia itself.

Section IV.—The Overlordship of Mercia, 685—823

[*Authorities.*—Very little can be gathered for this period from the English Chronicle, and reliance has mainly to be placed on post-Conquest compilations, of which the chief are Florence of Worcester (English Historical Society); Symeon of Durham, Henry of Huntingdon, and William of Malmesbury (Rolls Series). The letters of Boniface and Alcuin (in the "Mon. Hist. Germ.") throw some light on the period. Modern authorities as under the previous section.]

The supremacy of Northumbria fell for ever with the death of Ecgfrith and the defeat of Nechtansmere. To the north the flight of Bishop Trumwine from Whithern announced the revolt of Galloway from her rule. In the south, Mercia at once took up again the projects of independence which had been crushed by Wulfhere's defeat. His successor, the Mercian king Æthelred, again seized Ini of Wessex

685 to 823

the province of the Lindiswaras, and the war he thus began with Northumbria was only ended by a peace negotiated through Archbishop Theodore, which left him master of Middle England, and free to attempt the direct conquest of the south. For the moment indeed the attempt proved a fruitless one, for at the instant of Northumbria's fall Wessex rose into fresh power under Ini, the greatest of its early kings. Under his predecessor, Centwine, it had again taken up its war with the Britons, and conquered as far as the Quantocks. Ini, whose reign covered the long period from 688 to 726, carried on during the whole of it the war which Centwine had begun. He pushed his way southward round the marshes of the Parret to a more fertile territory, and guarded the frontier of his new conquests by a wooden fort on the banks of the Tone, which has grown into the present Taunton. The West-Saxons thus became masters of the whole district which now bears the name of Somerset, the shire of the Sumer-soetas, where the Tor rose like an island out of a waste of flood-drowned fen that stretched westward to the Channel. At the base of this hill Ini established on the site of an older British foundation his famous monastery of Glastonbury. The monastery probably took this English name from an English family, the Glæstings, who chose the spot for their settlement; but it had long been a place of pilgrimage, and the tradition of its having been the resting-place of a second Patrick drew thither the wandering scholars of Ireland. The first inhabitants of Ini's abbey found, as they alleged, "an ancient church built by no art of man"; and to this relic of a Roman time they added their own oratory of stone. The spiritual charge of his conquests Ini committed to Ealdhelm, the most famous scholar of his day, who became the first bishop of the see of Sherborne, which the king formed out of a part of the older diocese of Winchester so as to include the new parts of his kingdom. Ini's code, the earliest collection of West-Saxon laws which remains to us, shows a wise solicitude to provide for the civil as well as the ecclesiastical organization of his kingdom. His repulse of the Mercians, when they at last attacked Wessex, showed how well he could provide for its defence. Ceolred, the successor of Æthelred on the throne of Mercia, began the struggle with Wessex for the overlordship of the south; but he was repulsed in 714 in a bloody encounter at Wodnesburh on the borders of the two kingdoms. Able however as Ini was to hold Mercia at bay, he was unable to hush the civil strife that was the curse of Wessex, and a wild legend tells the story of the disgust which drove him from the world. He had feasted royally at one of his country houses, and on the morrow, as he rode from it, his queen bade him turn back thither. The king returned to find his house stripped of curtains and vessels, and foul with refuse and the dung of cattle, while in the royal bed where he had slept with Æthelburh rested a sow with her farrow of pigs. The scene had no need of the queen's comment: "See, my lord, how the fashion of this world passeth away!" In 726 Ini

laid down his crown, and sought peace and death in a pilgrimage to Rome. 685 to 823

The anarchy which had driven Ini from the throne broke out on his departure in civil strife which left Wessex an easy prey to the successor of Ceolred. Among those who sought Guthlac's retirement at Crowland came Æthelbald, a Mercian of royal blood flying from Ceolred's hate. Driven off again and again by the king's pursuit, Æthelbald still returned to the little hut he had built beside the hermitage, comforting himself in hours of despair with his companion's words. "Know how to wait," said Guthlac, "and the kingdom will come to thee; not by violence or rapine, but by the hand of God." In 716 Ceolred fell frenzy-smitten at his board, and Mercia chose Æthelbald for its king. Already the realm reached from Humber to Thames; and Æthelred, crossing the latter river, had reduced Kent beneath his overlordship. But with Æthelbald began Mercia's fiercest struggle for the complete supremacy of the south. He penetrated into the very heart of the West-Saxon kingdom, and his siege and capture of the royal town of Somerton in 733 ended the war. For twenty years the overlordship of Mercia was recognized by all Britain south of the Humber. Æthelbald styled himself "King not of the Mercians only, but of all the neighbouring peoples who are called by the common name of Southern English." The use of a title unknown till his day, that of "King of Britain," betrayed the daring hope that the creation of an English realm, so long attempted in vain by the kings of Northumbria, might be reserved for the new power of Mercia. But the aim of Æthelbald was destined to the same failure as that of his predecessors. England north of Humber was saved from his grasp by the heroic defence made by the Northumbrian king Eadberht, who renewed for a while the fading glories of his kingdom by an alliance with the Picts, which enabled him in 756 to conquer Strathclyde, and take its capital, Alcluyd, or Dumbarton. Southern England was wrested from Mercia by a revolt into which the West-Saxons were driven through the intolerable exactions of their new overlord. At the head of his own Mercian army, and of the subject hosts of Kent, Essex, and East-Anglia, Æthelbald marched in 752 to the field of Burford, where the West-Saxons were again marshalled under the golden dragon of their race; but after hours of desperate fighting in the very forefront of the battle, a sudden panic seized the Mercian king, and he fled first of his army from the field. A second Mercian defeat at Secandun in 755 confirmed the freedom of Wessex, but amidst the rout of his host Æthelbald redeemed the one hour of shame that had tarnished his glory. He refused to fly, and fell on the field.

Æthelbald of Mercia

While Mercia was thus battling for the overlordship of the south, Northumbria had set aside its glory in arms for the pursuits of peace. Under the peaceful reigns of Ecgfrith's successors, Ealdfrith the Learned and Ceolwulf, their kingdom became in the middle of the eighth century the literary centre of the Christian world in

Bæda

685 to 823

Western Europe. No schools were more famous than those of Jarrow and York. The whole learning of the age seemed to be summed up in a Northumbrian scholar. Bæda—the Venerable Bede as later times styled him—was born about ten years after the Synod of Whitby, beneath the shade of a great abbey which Benedict Biscop was rearing by the mouth of the Wear. His youth was trained and his long tranquil life was wholly spent in an offshoot of Benedict's house which was founded by his scholar Ceolfrid. Bæda never stirred from Jarrow. "I spent my whole life in the same monastery," he says, "and while attentive to the rule of my order and the service of the Church, my constant pleasure lay in learning, or teaching, or writing." The words sketch for us a scholar's life, the more touching in its simplicity that it is the life of the first great English scholar. The quiet grandeur of a life consecrated to knowledge, the tranquil pleasure that lies in learning and teaching and writing, dawned for Englishmen in the story of Bæda. While still young, he became teacher, and six hundred monks, besides strangers that flocked thither for instruction, formed his school of Jarrow. It is hard to imagine how among the toils of the schoolmaster and the duties of the monk Bæda could have found time for the composition of the numerous works that made his name famous in the West. But materials for study had accumulated in Northumbria through the journeys of Wilfrith and Benedict Biscop, and the libraries which were forming at Wearmouth and York. The tradition of the older Irish teachers still lingered to direct the young scholar into that path of Scriptural interpretation to which he chiefly owed his fame. Greek, a rare accomplishment in the West, came to him from the school which the Greek Archbishop Theodore founded beneath the walls of Canterbury. His skill in the ecclesiastical chaunt was derived from a Roman cantor whom Pope Vitalian sent in the train of Benedict Biscop. Little by little the young scholar thus made himself master of the whole range of the science of his time; he became, as Burke rightly styled him, "the father of English learning." The tradition of the older classic culture was first revived for England in his quotations of Plato and Aristotle, of Seneca and Cicero, of Lucretius and Ovid. Virgil cast over him the same spell that he cast over Dante; verses from the Æneid break his narratives of martyrdoms, and the disciple ventures on the track of the great master in a little eclogue descriptive of the approach of spring. His work was done with small aid from others. "I am my own secretary," he writes; "I make my own notes. I am my own librarian." But forty-five works remained after his death to attest his prodigious industry. In his own eyes and those of his contemporaries the most important among these were the commentaries and homilies upon various books of the Bible which he had drawn from the writings of the Fathers. But he was far from confining himself to theology. In treatises compiled as text-books for his scholars, Bæda threw together all that the world

had then accumulated in astronomy and meteorology, in physics and music, in philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, medicine. But the encyclopædic character of his researches left him in heart a simple Englishman. He loved his own English tongue, he was skilled in English song, his last work was a translation into English of the Gospel of St. John, and almost the last words that broke from his lips were some English rhymes upon death. 685 to 823

But the noblest proof of his love of England lies in the work which immortalizes his name. In his "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation," Bæda was at once the founder of mediæval history and the first English historian. All that we really know of the century and a half that follows the landing of Augustine, we know from him. Wherever his own personal observation extended, the story is told with admirable detail and force. He is hardly less full or accurate in the portions which he owed to his Kentish friends, Alcwine and Nothelm. What he owed to no informant was his own exquisite faculty of story-telling, and yet no story of his own telling is so touching as the story of his death. Two weeks before the Easter of 735 the old man was seized with an extreme weakness and loss of breath. He still preserved, however, his usual pleasantness and gay good-humour, and in spite of prolonged sleeplessness continued his lectures to the pupils about him. Verses of his own English tongue broke from time to time from the master's lip—rude rimes that told how before the "need-fare," Death's stern "must-go," none can enough bethink him what is to be his doom for good or ill. The tears of Bæda's scholars mingled with his song. "We never read without weeping," writes one of them. So the days rolled on to Ascension-tide, and still master and pupils toiled at their work, for Bæda longed to bring to an end his version of St. John's Gospel into the English tongue, and his extracts from Bishop Isidore. "I don't want my boys to read a lie," he answered those who would have had him rest, "or to work to no purpose, after I am gone." A few days before Ascension-tide his sickness grew upon him, but he spent the whole day in teaching, only saying cheerfully to his scholars, "Learn with what speed you may; I know not how long I may last." The dawn broke on another sleepless night, and again the old man called his scholars round him and bade them write. "There is still a chapter wanting," said the scribe, as the morning drew on, "and it is hard for thee to question thyself any longer." "It is easily done," said Bæda; "take thy pen and write quickly." Amid tears and farewells the day wore on to eventide. "There is yet one sentence unwritten, dear master," said the boy. "Write it quickly," bade the dying man. "It is finished now," said the little scribe at last. "You speak truth," said the master; "all is finished now." Placed upon the pavement, his head supported in his scholar's arms, his face turned to the spot where he was wont to pray, Bæda chaunted the solemn "Glory to God." As his voice reached the close of his song, he passed quietly away. Death of Bæda

685 to 823 — Anarchy of Northumbria

First among English scholars, first among English theologians, first among English historians, it is in the monk of Jarrow that English literature strikes its roots. In the six hundred scholars who gathered round him for instruction he is the father of our national education. In his physical treatises he is the first figure to which our science looks back. Bæda was a statesman as well as a scholar, and the letter which in the last year of his life he addressed to Archbishop Ecgberht of York shows how vigorously he proposed to battle against the growing anarchy of Northumbria. But his plans of reform came too late; and though a king like Eadberht might beat back the inroads of the Mercians and even conquer Strathclyde, before the anarchy of his own kingdom even Eadberht could only fling down his sceptre and seek a refuge in the cloisters of Lindisfarne. From the death of Bæda the history of Northumbria is in fact only a wild story of lawlessness and bloodshed. King after king was swept away by treason and revolt, the country fell into the hands of its turbulent nobles, the very fields lay waste, and the land was scourged by famine and plague. An anarchy almost as complete had fallen on Wessex after its repulse of Æthelbald's invasion. Only in Mercia was there any sign of order and settled rule.

Offa of Mercia

The two crushing defeats at Burford and Secandun were far from having broken the Mercian power. Under Offa, whose reign from 757 to 795 covers with that of Æthelbald nearly the whole of the eighth century, it rose to a height unknown before. The energy of the new king was shown in his struggle with the Welsh on his western border. Since the dissolution of the temporary alliance which Penda formed with the Welsh King Cadwallon, the war with the Britons in the west had been the one fatal hindrance to the progress of Mercia. Æthelbald had led in vain the united forces of his under-kings, and even of Wessex, against Wales. But it was under Offa that Mercia first really braced herself to the completion of her British conquests. Beating back the Welsh from Hereford, and carrying his own ravages into the heart of Wales, Offa drove the King of Powys from his capital, which changed its old name of Pengwern for the significant English title of the Town in the Scrub or Bush, Scrobbesbyryg, Shrewsbury. Experience, however, had taught the Mercians the worthlessness of raids like these. Offa resolved to create a military border by planting a settlement of Englishmen between the Severn, which had till then served as the western boundary of the English race, and the huge "Offa's Dyke," which he drew from the mouth of Wye to that of Dee. Here, as in the later conquests of the West-Saxons, we find the old plan of extermination definitely abandoned. The Welsh who chose to remain dwelt undisturbed among their English conquerors, and it was to regulate the mutual relations of the two races that Offa drew up a code of Mercian laws which bore his name. From these conquests over the Britons, Offa turned to make a fresh attempt to gain that overlordship over Britain

which his predecessors had failed to win. His policy was marked by a singular combination of activity and self-restraint. He refrained carefully from any effort to realize his aim by force of arms. An expedition against the town of Hastings, indeed, with a victory at Otford on the Derwent, reasserted the supremacy of Mercia over Kent, when it was shaken for a time by a revolt of the Kentishmen; and East-Anglia seems to have been directly annexed to the Mercian kingdom. But his relations with Northumbria and with Wessex were for the most part peaceful, and his aim was rather at the exercise of a commanding influence over them than at the assertion of any overlordship in name. He avenged Æthelbald's defeats by a victory over the West-Saxons at Bensington, but he attempted no subjugation of their country. He contented himself with placing a creature of his own on its throne, and with wedding him to his daughter Eadburh. The marriage of a second daughter with the King of Northumbria established a similar influence in the north. Both the Northumbrian and the West-Saxon king were threatened by rival claimants of their thrones, and both looked for aid against them to the arms of Offa. Without jarring against their jealous assertion of independence, Offa had in fact brought both Wessex and Northumbria into dependence on Mercia. 635 to 823

Such a supremacy must soon have passed into actual sovereignty, but for the intervention at this moment of a power from across the sea, the power of the Franks. The connection of the Franks with the English kingdoms at this time was brought about by a missionary from Wessex. Boniface (or Winfrith) followed in the track of earlier preachers, both Irish and English, who had been labouring to little purpose among the heathens of Germany, and especially among those who had now become subjects to the Franks. It was through the disciples whom he planted along the line of his labours that the Frankish sovereigns were drawn to an interest in English affairs. Whether from mere jealousy of a neighbour state, or from designs of an invasion and conquest of England which the growth of any great central power in the island would check, the support of the weaker kingdoms against Mercia became the policy of the Frankish Court. When Eadberht of Northumbria was attacked by Æthelbald of Mercia, the Frank King Pippin sent him presents and the offer of an alliance. When Pippin's son, Charles the Great, succeeded him, he received with favour an appeal for protection sent by King Ealhred of Northumbria through Lullus, who had followed Boniface as Archbishop of Maintz. The Court of Charles became a place of refuge for the enemies of Mercia; for Eardwulf, who had in vain disputed the Northumbrian crown with Æthelred, the husband of one of Offa's daughters, and for Ecgberht, a claimant of the West-Saxon crown, who was driven from Wessex by the husband of another. A revolt of Kent against Mercia at last brought Charles and Offa into open collision. Kent appealed to

England and the Franks

785 to 823

Charles for protection, but the threats of Charles were met by Offa with defiance. The Mercian army reconquered Kent; and a plot of Jaenberht, the Archbishop of Canterbury, for bringing about a landing of Frankish troops, was discovered and defeated. Offa drove the archbishop into exile, and punished his see by setting up Lichfield as a rival archbishopric. The failure of a marriage negotiation widened the breach between the two sovereigns: each closed the ports on his own side of the channel against the subjects of the other; and war was only averted by the efforts of a Northumbrian scholar, Alcwine, whose learning had secured him the confidence and friendship of Charles the Great.

Fall of Mercia

The good sense of the Frankish sovereign probably told him that the time was not come for any projects against Britain. Secure on either border, his kingdom wealthy with years of peace and order, and his armies fresh from victories over Welshman and Kentishman, Offa was no unworthy antagonist for Charles the Great. Charles therefore not only declined a struggle, but negotiated with his rival a treaty, memorable as the first monument of our foreign diplomacy, which secured protection for the English merchants and pilgrims who were making their way in growing numbers to Rome. But the death of Offa in 795 at once reopened the strife. The hand of Charles was seen in a new revolt of Kent, and in the support which he gave to the appeal of the Archbishop of Canterbury against the archbishopric which Offa had set up at Lichfield. Cenwulf, Offa's successor, showed a vigour and moderation worthy of Offa himself. He roughly put down the Kentish revolt, and then conciliated the Kentish archbishop by the suppression of the rival see. But the next move of Charles proved a more fatal one. On the death of Brihtric, the sovereign whom Offa had set up over Wessex, Ecgberht was at once despatched from the Frankish Court, and welcomed by the West-Saxons as their king. Some years after, the influence of Charles brought about the restoration of Eardwulf, who, like Ecgberht, had taken refuge at his court, to the throne of Northumbria. In the north as in the south, the work of Offa was thus undone. Within, Mercia was torn by a civil war which broke out on Cenwulf's death; and the weakness which this produced was seen when the old strife with Wessex was renewed by his successor Beornwulf who in 823 penetrated into Wiltshire, and was defeated in a bloody battle at Ellandun. All England south of the Thames at once submitted to Ecgberht of Wessex, and East-Anglia rose in a desperate revolt which proved fatal to its Mercian rulers. Beornwulf and his successor Ludeca fell in two great defeats at the hands of the East-Anglians; and Wiglaf had hardly mounted the Mercian throne when his exhausted kingdom was called on again to encounter the West-Saxon. While Mercia was struggling against the revolt of East-Anglia, Ecgberht had carried on the old war of Wessex with the Briton, had conquered and colonized Devon, and fixed the new English border at the Tamar. The weakness of

Mercia after its two defeats called him to a greater conquest. In 827 his army marched northward without a struggle. Wiglaf fled helplessly before it; and Mercia bowed to the West-Saxon overlordship. From Mercia Ecgberht marched on Northumbria, but a century of bloodshed and anarchy had robbed that kingdom of all vigour, and its nobles met him at the Don with an acknowledgment of his overlordship. He turned to the West; and the Welsh, who were still smarting from the heavy blows inflicted on them by Mercia, submitted to the joint army of Mercians and West-Saxons which he led into the field. The dream of Eadwine and of Offa seemed at last made real: and in right of an overlordship which stretched from the Forth to the British Channel Ecgberht styled himself "the King of the English." 800 to 880

Green's account of the reign of Offa requires considerable revision. His policy towards the Welsh appears to have been defensive; the Dyke was meant rather to mark a boundary than to mark an advance or to provide a means of defence. Nor is there any proof for the view that Charles the Great was actuated by intense hostility towards Mercia. On the contrary, the quarrel which arose from the failure of the marriage negotiations was apparently soon adjusted, and in general the relations of the two rulers seem to have been exceptionally friendly. For the whole question, see Oman, "History of England before the Norman Conquest," and Davis, "Charlemagne."

Section V.—Wessex and the Danes, 800—880

[*Authorities.*—The English Chronicle becomes invaluable in this period; for a discussion of its character, see Plummer's introduction to his edition. The authenticity of Asser, "De Rebus Gestis Ælfredi," has been fully established by Stevenson in his edition, in which the interpolations from later sources have been carefully distinguished from the original text. Modern authorities as under previous sections.]

As the Frank had undermined the greatness of Mercia, so the Dane struck down the short-lived greatness of Wessex. Norway and its fellow Scandinavian kingdoms, Sweden and Denmark, were being brought at this time into more settled order by a series of great sovereigns, and the bolder spirits who would not submit to their rule were driven to the sea, and embraced a life of piracy and war. Ecgberht had hardly brought all Britain under his sway when these Danes, as all the Northmen were at this time called, were seen hovering off the English coast, and growing in numbers and hardihood as they crept southward to the Thames. The first sight of the Danes is as if the hand on the dial of history had gone back three hundred years. The same Norwegian fiords, the same Frisian sandbanks, pour forth their pirate fleets as in the days of Hengest and Cerdic. There is the same wild panic as the black boats of the invaders strike inland along the river reaches, or moor round the river islets, the same sights of horror—firing of homesteads, slaughter of men, women driven off to slavery or shame, The Danes

500 to 880

children tossed on pikes or sold in the market-place—as when the English invaders attacked Britain. Christian priests were again slain at the altar by worshippers of Woden, for the Danes were still heathen. Letters, arts, religion, governments disappeared before these Northmen as before the Northmen of old. But when the wild burst of the storm was over, land, people, government reappeared unchanged. England still remained England; the Danes sank quietly into the mass of those around them; and Woden yielded without a struggle to Christ. The secret of this difference between the two invasions was that the battle was no longer between men of different races. It was no longer a fight between Briton and German, between Englishman and Welshman. The Danes were the same people in blood and speech with the people they attacked; they were in fact Englishmen bringing back to an England that had forgotten its origins the barbaric England of its pirate forefathers. Nowhere over Europe was the fight so fierce, because nowhere else were the combatants men of one blood and one speech. But just for this reason the fusion of the Northmen with their foes was nowhere so peaceful and so complete.

The Danish Conquests

Under Ecgberht and his son Æthelwulf the attacks of the Danes were directed to the two extremities of the West-Saxon realm. They swept up the Thames to the plunder of London and Canterbury, and rearoused the Welsh war on the frontier of Devon. It was in the alliance of the Danes with the Britons that the danger of these earlier inroads lay. Ecgberht defeated the united forces of these two enemies in a victory at Hengestesdun; and his son Æthelwulf, who succeeded him in 838, drove back the Welsh of North Wales who were encouraged to rise in revolt by the same Danish co-operation. Danes and Welshmen were beaten again and again, and yet the danger grew greater year by year. King Æthelwulf fought strenuously in the defence of his realm; in the defeat of Charmouth, as in the victory of Aclea, he led his troops in person against the sea-robbers. The dangers to the Christian faith from these heathen assailants roused the clergy to his aid. Swithhun, Bishop of Winchester, became Æthelwulf's minister; Ealhstan, Bishop of Sherborne, became the most formidable among the soldiers of the Cross. The first complete victory over the Danes in an encounter at the mouth of the Parret was of Ealhstan's winning. At last hard fighting gained the realm a little respite; for eight years the Danes left the land, and in 858 Æthelwulf died in peace. But these earlier Danish forays had been mere preludes to the real burst of the Danish storm. When it burst in its full force upon the island, it was no longer a series of plunder-raids, but the invasion of Britain by a host of conquerors who settled as they conquered. In 866 the Danes landed in East-Anglia, and marched in the next spring across the Humber upon York. Civil strife, as usual, distracted the energies of Northumbria. Its subject-crown was disputed by two claimants, and when they united to meet this common danger both fell in the same defeat

ENGLAND
in the
NINTH CENTURY.
English Miles
0 20 40 60 80
Wessex and its immediate Dependencies
Sites of Battles marked thus +
6
4
2
0
2
56
54
Picts
Alcluyd
Edinburgh
STRATHCLYDE
BERNICIA
NORTHUMBERLAND
I. of Man
DEIRA
YORK
Manchester
Gainas

Nottingham
R. Trent
Repton
Holland
Crowland
Shrewsbury
Lichfield
Tamworth
Medeshampsted
Peterborough
Bridgenorth
Tettenhall
M E R C I A
R. Ouse
Northfolk
Norwich
EAST
ANGLIA
Southfolk
Magesætas
Warwick
R. Nen
Worcester
Bedford
Brecknock
Hereford
Dyfed
Gwent
Morganwg
R. Severn
Burford
Kirtlington
Cirencester
Kempsford
Hertford
Essex
St. Albans
Bensington
Cricklade
Wallingford
Caerleon
Wantage
M. sex
LONDON
R. Thames
I. of Sheppey
Pyrkelhurch
Chippenham
Wanborough
Bristol
Calne
Ascesdun
Reading
Merton
Bath
Elhandun
Basing
Surrey
CANTERBURY
Wedmore
Wells
Frome
Ellandun
(Walton)
Ockley
Watchet
Aller
S
E
X
WINCHESTER
K e n t
Athelney
Glastonbury
Somerton
Salisbury
Andredesweald
Appledore
Taunton
Shaftesbury
S u s s e x
Axminster
Sherborne
Wimborne
Dorchester
Warehum
EXETER
Cortesgate
Swanwick
Gafulford
Hengestesdun
WEST WALES
52
50
6
4
0
Longitude West 2 of Greenwich

before the walls of their capital. Northumbria at once submitted to the Danes, and Mercia was only saved by a hasty march of King Æthelred, the successor of Æthelwulf, to its aid. Æthelred was the third of Æthelwulf's sons, who had mounted the throne after the short reigns of his brothers, Æthelbald and Æthelberht. But the Peace of Nottingham, by which Æthelred saved Mercia in 868, gave the Danes leisure to prepare for an invasion of East-Anglia, whose under-king, Eadmund, brought prisoner before the Danish leaders, was bound to a tree and shot to death with arrows. His martyrdom by the heathen made him the St. Sebastian of English legend; in later days his figure gleamed from the pictured windows of every church along the eastern coast, and the stately Abbey of St. Edmundsbury rose over his relics. With Eadmund ended the line of East-Anglian under-kings, for his kingdom was not only conquered but divided among the soldiers of the Danish host, and their leader Guthrum assumed its crown. Then the Northmen turned to the richer spoil of the great abbeys of the Fen. Peterborough, Crowland, Ely, went up in flames, and their monks fled or were slain among the ruins. Mercia, though it was as yet still spared from actual conquest, crouched in terror before the Danes, acknowledged them in 870 as its overlords, and paid them tribute. 800 to 880

In five years the work of Ecgberht had been undone, and England north of the Thames had been torn from the overlordship of Wessex. So rapid a conquest as the Danish conquest of Northumbria, Mercia, and East-Anglia, had only been made possible by the temper of these kingdoms themselves. To them the conquest was simply their transfer from one overlord to another, and it would seem as if they preferred the overlordship of the Dane to the overlordship of the West-Saxon. It was another sign of the enormous difficulty of welding these kingdoms together into a single people. The time had now come for Wessex to fight, not for supremacy, but for life. As yet it seemed paralysed by terror. With the exception of his one march on Nottingham, King Æthelred had done nothing to save his under-kingdoms from the wreck. But the Danes no sooner pushed up Thames to Reading, than the West-Saxons, attacked on their own soil, turned fiercely at bay. The tongue of land between the Kennet and Thames was contested in four doubtful battles, but Æthelred died in the midst of the struggle, and in 871 the withdrawal of the Danes left his youngest brother Ælfred king, with a few years' breathing-space for his realm. It was easy for the quick eye of Ælfred to see that the Danes had withdrawn simply with the view of gaining firmer footing for a new attack; indeed, three years had hardly passed before Mercia was invaded, and its under-king driven over sea to make place for a tributary of the Danes. From Repton half their host marched northwards to the Tyne, dividing a land where there was little left to plunder, colonizing and tilling it, while Guthrum led the rest into his kingdom of East-Anglia to prepare for their next year's attack on Wessex. In 876 the Danish fleet Danes and Wessex

800 to 880

appeared before Wareham, and when driven thence by Ælfred, threw themselves into Exeter and allied themselves with the Welsh. Through the winter Ælfred girded himself for this new peril. At break of spring his army closed round the town, while a hired fleet cruised off the coast to guard against rescue. The peril of their brethren in Exeter forced a part of the Danish host which had remained at Wareham to put to sea with the view of aiding them, but they were caught in a mist by the English squadron and driven on the rocks of Swanage.

Peace of Wedmore

Exeter was at last starved into surrender, and the Danes again swore to leave Wessex. They withdrew to Gloucester, but Ælfred had hardly disbanded his troops when his enemies, roused by the arrival of fresh hordes eager for plunder, reappeared at Chippenham, and in the mid-winter of 878 marched ravaging over the land. The surprise was complete, and for a month or two the general panic left no hope of resistance. Ælfred, with his small band of followers, could only throw himself into a fort raised hastily in the isle of Athelney, among the marshes of the Parret. It was a position from which he could watch closely the movements of his foes, and with the first burst of spring he called the thegns of Somerset to his standard, and still gathering his troops as he moved, marched through Wiltshire on the Danes. He found their host at Edington, defeated it in a great battle, and after a siege of fourteen days forced their camp to surrender. Their leader, Guthrum of East-Anglia, was baptized as a Christian and bound by a solemn peace, or "frith," at Wedmore in Somerset. For ten years all danger from the Northmen was at an end.

Ælfred 871 to 901

With the Peace of Wedmore in 878 began a work even more noble than this deliverance of Wessex from the Dane. "So long as I have lived," wrote Ælfred in later days, "I have striven to live worthily." He longed, when death overtook him, "to leave to the men that come after a remembrance of him in good works." The aim has been more than fulfilled. The memory of the life and doings of the noblest of English rulers has come down to us living and distinct through the mist of exaggeration and legend that gathered round it. Politically or intellectually, indeed, the sphere of Ælfred's action is too small to justify a comparison of him with the few whom the world claims as its greatest men. What really lifts him to their level is the moral grandeur of his life. He lived solely for the good of his people. He is the first instance in the history of Christendom of the Christian king, of a ruler who put aside every personal aim or ambition to devote himself to the welfare of those whom he ruled. So long as he lived he strove "to live worthily"; but in his mouth a life of worthiness meant a life of justice, temperance, self-sacrifice. The Peace of Wedmore at once marked the temper of the man. Ardent warrior as he was, with a disorganized England before him, he set aside at thirty-one the dream of conquest to leave behind him the memory, not of victories but of "good works," of daily toils by which he

secured peace, good government, education for his people. His policy was one of peace. He set aside all dreams of the recovery of the West-Saxon overlordship. With England across the Watling Street, a Roman road which ran from Chester to London, in other words with Northumbria, East-Anglia, and the bulk of Mercia, Ælfred had nothing to do. All that he retained was his own Wessex, with London and the country round it, and with the districts north of the Thames which the Mercian king Wulfere had long ago torn away from Wessex, but which the Peace of Wedmore restored to Wessex again. Over these latter districts, to which the name of Mercia was now confined, while the rest of the Mercian kingdom became known as the Five Boroughs of the Danes, Ælfred set the Ealdorman Æthelred, the husband of his daughter Æthelflæd, a ruler well fitted by his courage and activity to guard Wessex against inroads from the north. Against invasion from the sea he provided by a closer union of the dependent kingdoms of Kent and Sussex with Wessex itself, by the better organization of military service, and by the creation of a fleet. 800 to 880

The defence of his realm thus provided for, he devoted himself to its good government. His work was of a simple and practical order. He was wanting in the imaginative qualities which mark the higher statesman, nor can we trace in his acts any sign of a creative faculty or any perception of new ideas. In politics as in war, or in his after dealings with letters, he simply took what was closest at hand and made the best of it. The laws of Ini and Offa were codified and amended, justice was more rigidly administered, corporal punishment was substituted in most cases for the old blood-wite or money-fine, and the right of private revenge was curtailed. The strong moral bent of Ælfred's mind was seen in some of the novelties of his legislation. The Ten Commandments and a portion of the Law of Moses were prefixed to his code, and thus became part of the law of the land. Labour on Sundays and holydays was made criminal, and heavy punishments were exacted for sacrilege, perjury, and the seduction of nuns. Much of the success of his actual administration was due, no doubt, to his choice of instruments. He had a keen eye for men. Denewulf, the Bishop of Winchester, was said to have been a swineherd in the forest when Ælfred, struck with the quickness of his wit, took him home and reared him at his court. The story is a mere legend, but it conveys a popular impression of the king's rapid recognition of merit in any station. He could hardly have chosen braver or more energetic coadjutors than those whom he employed both in his political and in his educational efforts. The two children whom he himself trained for rule, Eadward and Æthelflæd, proved the ablest rulers of their time. But the secret of his good government lay mainly in the intense energy of Ælfred himself. Ælfred's Rule

The spirit of adventure that made him in youth the first huntsman of his day, the reckless daring of his early manhood, took later and graver form in an activity that found time amidst the Ælfred's Character

800 to 880

cares of state for the daily duties of religion, for converse with strangers, for study and translation, for learning poems by heart, for planning buildings and instructing craftsmen in gold-work, for teaching even falconers and dog-keepers their business. Restless as he was, his activity was the activity of a mind strictly practical. Ælfred was pre-eminently a man of business, careful of detail, laborious, and methodical. He carried in his bosom a little hand-book, in which he jotted down things as they struck him; now a bit of family genealogy, now a prayer, now a story, such as that of Bishop Ealdhelm singing sacred songs on the bridge. Each hour of the king's day had its peculiar task; there was the same order in the division of his revenue and in the arrangement of his court. But active and busy as he was, his temper remained simple and kindly. We have few stories of his life that are more than mere legends, but even legend itself never ventured to depart from the outlines of a character which men knew so well. During his months of waiting at Athelney, while the country was overrun by the Danes, he was said to have entered a peasant's hut, and to have been bidden by the housewife, who did not recognize him, to turn the cakes which were baking on the hearth. The young king did as he was bidden, but in the sad thoughts which came over him he forgot his task, and bore in amused silence the scolding of the good wife, who found her cakes spoilt on her return. This tale, if nothing more than a tale, could never have been told of a man without humour. Tradition told of his genial good-nature, of his chattiness over the adventures of his life, and above all of his love for song. In his busiest days Ælfred found time to learn the old songs of his race by heart, and bade them be taught in the Palace-school. As he translated the tales of the heathen mythology he lingered fondly over and expanded them, and in moments of gloom he found comfort in the music of the Psalms.

Ælfred and Literature

Neither the wars nor the legislation of Ælfred were destined to leave such lasting traces upon England as the impulse he gave to its literature. His end indeed even in this was practical rather than literary. What he aimed at was simply the education of his people. As yet Wessex was the most ignorant among the English kingdoms. "When I began to reign," said Ælfred, "I cannot remember one south of Thames who could explain his service-book in English." Even in the more highly cultivated towns of Mercia and Northumbria the Danish sword had left few survivors of the school of Ecgberht or Bæda. To remedy this ignorance Ælfred desired that at least every free-born youth who possessed the means should "abide at his book till he can well understand English writing." He himself superintended a school which he had established for the young nobles of his court. At home he found none to help him in his educational efforts but a few Mercian prelates and priests, with one Welsh bishop, Asser. "Formerly," the king writes bitterly, "men came hither from foreign lands to seek for instruction, and now when we desire it we can only obtain

it from abroad." But his mind was far from being prisoned within his own island. He sent a Norwegian ship-master to explore the White Sea, and Wulfstan to trace the coast of Esthonia; envoys bore his presents to the churches of India and Jerusalem, and an annual mission carried Peter's-pence to Rome. It was with France, however, that his intercourse was closest, and it was from thence that he drew the scholars to aid him in his work of education. A scholar named Grimbald came from St. Omer to preside over the new abbey at Winchester; and John, the old Saxon, was fetched from the abbey of Corbey to rule a monastery and school that Ælfred's gratitude for his deliverance from the Danes raised in the marshes of Athelney. 800 to 880

The real work, however, to be done was done not by these scholars, but by the king himself. Ælfred resolved to throw open to his people in their own tongue the knowledge which had till then been limited to the clergy. He took his books as he found them—they were the popular manuals of his age—the Consolation of Boethius, the Pastoral of Pope Gregory, the compilation of Orosius, then the one accessible handbook of universal history, and the history of his own people by Bæda. He translated these works into English, but he was far more than a translator, he was an editor for the people. Here he omitted, there he expanded. He enriched Orosius by a sketch of the new geographical discoveries in the North. He gave a West-Saxon form to his selections from Bæda. In one place he stops to explain his theory of government, his wish for a thicker population, his conception of national welfare as consisting in a due balance of the priest, the soldier, and the churl. The mention of Nero spurs him to an outbreak on the abuses of power. The cold providence of Boethius gives way to an enthusiastic acknowledgment of the goodness of God. As he writes, his large-hearted nature flings off its royal mantle, and talks as a man to men. "Do not blame me," he prays, with a charming simplicity, "if any know Latin better than I, for every man must say what he says and do what he does according to his ability." But simple as was his aim, Ælfred created English literature. Before him, England possessed in her own tongue one great poem, that of Cædmon, and a train of ballads and battle songs. Prose she had none. The mighty roll of the books that fill her libraries begins with the translations of Ælfred, and above all with the Chronicle of his reign. It seems likely that the king's rendering of Bæda's history gave the first impulse towards the compilation of what is known as the English or Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which was certainly thrown into its present form during his reign. The meagre lists of the kings of Wessex and of the bishops of Winchester, which had been preserved from older times, were roughly expanded into a national history by insertions from Bæda; but it is when it reaches the reign of Ælfred that the Chronicle suddenly widens into the vigorous narrative, full of life and originality, that marks the gift of a new power to the English Ælfred's Translations

892 to 1016 tongue. Varying as it does from age to age in historic value, it remains the first vernacular history of any Teutonic people, the earliest and the most venerable monument of Teutonic prose. The writer of English history may be pardoned if he lingers too fondly over the figure of the king in whose court, at whose impulse, it may be in whose very words, English history begins.

Section VI.—The West-Saxon Realm, 892—1016

[*Authorities.*—The English Chronicle remains our chief source, though in this period it is of varying value, being somewhat defective from the death of Edward the Elder to the accession of Æthelred. It may be supplemented from later compilations, more especially from Florence of Worcester. Of the lives of Dunstan (edited in the Rolls Series), the most useful is that known as "B." All previous editions of Anglo-Saxon laws have been superseded by that of Liebermann; the charters of the English kings may be found in Kemble, "Codex Diplomaticus." For Anglo-Saxon institutions, reference may be made to Stubbs; Vinogradoff, "The Growth of the Manor" and "Villainage in England"; and Chadwick, "Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions."]

Mercia and the Danes

The brunt of the invasion which at last broke under the Danish leader Hasting upon England fell mainly on the brave ealdorman whom the king had set over Mercia. After a year's fruitless struggle to force the strong position in which Ælfred covered Wessex,

892 Hasting left his fastness in the Andredswald and crossed the Thames. But the energy of Ealdorman Æthelred was even more formidable than the patient strategy of the king. Followed by the Londoners Æthelred stormed the Danish camp at Benfleet, followed the host as it rode along Thames to rouse new revolts in Wales, caught it on the Severn, and defeated it with a great slaughter. Falling back on Essex, Hasting repeated his dash upon the west, but Æthelred drove him from his hold at Chester, and hung on his rear as he retreated to his camp on the Lea. Here Ælfred, free from all danger in Wessex, came to his lieutenant's aid, and the capture of the Danish ships by the two forts with which the king barred the river virtually ended the war. The

895 Danes streamed back from Wales, whither they had retreated, to their old quarters in France, and the new English fleet drove the freebooters from the Channel.

Ælfred's Death 901

The death of Ælfred and Æthelred soon followed these exploits, but the fame of Mercia was safe in the hands of its "Lady," the daughter of Ælfred, Æthelflæd. During a few years of peace she girded her strength for the conquest of the "Five Boroughs," the rude Danish confederacy which had taken the place of the older Mercian kingdom. Derby represented the original Mercia in the upper Trent, Lincoln the Lindiswaras, Leicester the Middle-English, Stamford the province of the Gyrwas—the marshmen of the Fens—Nottingham probably that of the Southumbrians. The

realm of Penda had become strongly Danish; each of the "Boroughs" seems to have been ruled by its earl with his separate "host"; within, twelve "lawmen" administered Danish law, while a common justice-court existed for the whole confederacy. In her attack on their powerful league Æthelflæd abandoned the older strategy of battle and raid for that of siege and fortress-building. Advancing along the line of Trent, she had fortified Tamworth and Stafford on its head-waters, when a rising in Gwent called her back to the Welsh border. Her army stormed Brecknock; and Owain, its king, no sooner fled for shelter to the Danes, in whose aid he had risen, than Æthelflæd at once closed on Derby. The raids of the Danes of Middle-England failed to draw the Lady of Mercia from her prey; and Derby was hardly her own when, turning southward, she forced the surrender of Leicester.

892 to 1016

Æthelflæd, the Lady of the Mercians 913 to 918

Æthelflæd died in the midst of her triumphs, and Eadward at once annexed Mercia to Wessex. The brilliancy of her exploits had as yet eclipsed his own, but the son of Ælfred was a vigorous and active ruler; he had repulsed a dangerous inroad of the Northmen from France, summoned no doubt by the cry of distress from their brethren in England, and had bridled East-Anglia to the south by the erection of forts at Hertford and Witham. He now undertook the systematic reduction of the Danelagh, as the district occupied by the Danes began to be called. South of the Middle-English and the Fens lay a tract watered by the Ouse and the Nen—originally the district of a tribe known as the South-English, and now, like the Five Boroughs of the north, grouped round the towns of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Northampton. The reduction of these was followed by that of East-Anglia; the Danes of the Fens submitted with Stamford, the Southumbrians with Nottingham. Eadward's Mercian troops had already seized Manchester, he himself was preparing to complete his conquests, when the whole of the north suddenly laid itself at his feet. Not merely Northumbria, but the Scots and the Britons of Strathclyde, "chose him to father and lord." The submission had probably been brought about, like that of the North-Welsh to Ælfred, by the pressure of mutual feuds, and it was as valueless as theirs. Within a year after Eadward's death the north was again on fire. Æthelstan, Ælfred's golden-haired grandson, whom the king had girded as a child with a sword set in a golden scabbard and a gem-studded belt, incorporated Northumbria with his dominions; then turning westward broke a league which had been formed between the North-Welsh and the Scots, forced them to pay annual tribute, to march in his armies, and to attend his councils. The West-Welsh of Cornwall were reduced to a like vassalage, and finally driven from Exeter, which they had shared till then with its English inhabitants. The revolt of the King of the Scots, Constantine, was punished by an army which wasted his kingdom, while a fleet ravaged its coasts to Caithness. But the revolt only heralded the formidable confederacy in which Scotland, Cumberland, and the British and Danish chiefs of the

Wessex and the Danelagh

Eadward the Elder 901 to 925

Æthelstan 925 to 940

892 to 1016 — *Brunanburh* 937 — *Eadmund* 940 to 946 — Dunstan

west and east rose at the appearance of the fleet of Anlaf in the Humber. The king's victory at Brunanburh, sung in noblest war-song, seemed the wreck of Danish hopes, but the work of conquest was still to be done. On Æthelstan's death, the Danelagh rose again in revolt; and though his young son Eadmund won back the Five Boroughs, the peace which was negotiated by the two archbishops, Oda and Wulfstan, restored the old balance of Ælfred's day, and re-established Watling Street as the boundary between Wessex and the Danes.

The completion of the West-Saxon realm was in fact reserved for the hands, not of a king or warrior, but of a priest. Dunstan stands first in the line of ecclesiastical statesmen who counted among them Lanfranc and Wolsey, and ended in Laud. He is still more remarkable in himself, in his own vivid personality after eight centuries of revolution and change. He was born in the little hamlet of Glastonbury, beside Ini's church; his father, Heorstan, was a man of wealth, and brother of the bishops of Wells and of Winchester. It must have been in his father's hall that the fair, diminutive boy, with his scant but beautiful hair, caught his charm over animals, his love for "the vain songs of ancient heathendom, the trifling legends, the funeral chaunts," which afterwards roused against him the charge of sorcery. Thence, too, he may have derived his passionate love of music, and his custom of carrying his harp in hand on journey or visit. The wandering scholars of Ireland had left their books in the monastery of Glastonbury, as they left them along the Rhine and the Danube; and Dunstan plunged into the study of sacred and profane letters till his brain broke down in delirium. His knowledge became famous in the neighbourhood and reached the court of Æthelstan, but his appearance there was the signal for a burst of ill-will among the courtiers, many of whom were probably kinsmen of his own. They drove him from the king's train, threw him from his horse as he passed through the marshes; and, with the wild passion of their age, trampled him under foot in the mire. The outrage ended in fever, and Dunstan rose from his sick-bed a monk. But his devotion took no ascetic turn. His nature was sunny, versatile, artistic; full of strong affections, and capable of inspiring others with affections as strong. Quick-witted, of tenacious memory, a ready and fluent speaker, gay and genial in address, an artist, a musician, he was at the same time an indefatigable worker, busy at books, at building, at handicraft. His monastic profession seems to have been little more than a vow of celibacy. Throughout his manhood he won the affection of women; he now became the chaplain and guide of a woman of high rank, who lived only for charity and the entertainment of pilgrims. "He ever clave to her, and loved her in wondrous fashion." The wealth of his devotee was placed unreservedly at his command; his sphere began to widen; we see him followed by a train of pupils, busy with literature, writing, harping, painting, designing. One morning a lady summons him to her house to design

a robe which she is embroidering. As he bends with her maidens over their toil, his harp hung upon the wall sounds without mortal touch tones which the excited ears around frame into a joyous antiphon. The tie which bound him to this scholar-life was broken by the death of his patroness, and Dunstan was suddenly called to a wider sphere of activity by the accession of Eadmund. But the old jealousies revived at his reappearance at court, and counting the game lost Dunstan prepared again to withdraw. The king had spent the day in the chase; the red deer which he was pursuing dashed over Cheddar cliffs, and his horse only checked itself on the brink of the ravine while Eadmund in the bitterness of death was repenting of his injustice to Dunstan. He was at once summoned on the king's return. "Saddle your horse," said Eadmund, "and ride with me." The royal train swept over the marshes to his home; and the king, bestowing on him the kiss of peace, seated him in the priestly chair as Abbot of Glastonbury. 892 to 1016 943

The hand of the new minister was soon seen in the settlement of the north. He seized on the Scots as a balance to the Danes, and secured the aid of their king by investing him with the fief of Cumberland. Northumbria at once fell into Eadmund's hands, and submitted peaceably at his death to his brother Eadred. A revolt two years later enabled Dunstan to fling the head of the Danish resistance, the Archbishop of York, Wulstan, into prison, and to depose him from his see, while the Northumbrian realm sank into an earldom under Oswulf. On Eadger's accession, the minister hastened to complete his work. The great earldom was broken into three portions; Oswulf retained the central part between Tees and Tweed which appropriated to itself the larger title of the whole; Deira, revived for Earl Oslac, became our Yorkshire. The Scot king, Kenneth, already secured by the grant of Cumberland, was now probably bound to the English supremacy by the grant of Northern Northumbria, the county between the Forth and the Tweed. The grant was more important in its bearing on the history of Scotland than on our own. Lothian became the chief abode of its new rulers, Edinburgh their capital. The Scot kings were absorbed into the mass of their English subjects, and renounced their old Gaelic for the English tongue. But the settlement of the north already indicated the large and statesmanlike course which Dunstan was to pursue in the general administration of the realm. He seems to have adopted from the beginning a national rather than a West-Saxon policy. The charge against his later rule, that he gave too much power to the Dane and too much love to strangers, is the best proof of the unprovincial temper of his administration. In the code which he promulgated he expressly reserved to the north its old Danish rights, "with as good laws as they best might choose." The resentment of Wessex was seen in the revolution which followed on the death of Eadred. His successor, Eadwig, had contracted an uncanonical marriage; he added to the irritation of the prelates by withdrawing to his queen's chamber in the midst

Dunstan's administration

Eadred 947 to 955

Eadwig 955 to 958

of the coronation feast. Dunstan, commissioned by the bishops and nobles, drew him roughly into the hall. The wrath of the boy-king drove the abbot over sea, and his whole system went with him. The kingdom at once broke up; Mercia and Northumbria cast off the rule of Wessex, and chose Eadgar, the brother of Eadwig, for their king.

Dunstan the Primate

Dunstan was recalled by the Mercian Witenagemot, and received for Eadgar the sees of London and Winchester. When the scandals of Eadwig's misgovernment ended two years after in his death, Wessex submitted to the king who had been already accepted by the north, and Dunstan, now raised to the see of Canterbury, wielded for sixteen years as the minister of Eadgar the secular and ecclesiastical powers of the realm. Never had England seemed so strong or so peaceful. We have already noticed the settlement of the north; without, a fleet cruising round the coast reduced the Danes of Ireland beneath the English overlordship; eight vassal kings rowed Eadgar (so ran the legend) in his boat on the Dee.

Eadgar 958 to 975

946 The death of King Eadmund had shown the internal disorder of the state; as the king feasted at Pucklechurch a robber, Leofa, whom he had banished, sate himself at the royal board and drew on the cupbearer who bade him retire. Eadmund, springing to his thegn's aid, seized the robber by his hair and flung him to the ground, but Leofa had stabbed the king ere rescue could arrive. The stern hand of Dunstan restored justice and order, while his care for commerce was shown in the laws which regulated the monetary standard and the enactments of common weights and measures for the realm. Thanet was ravaged when the wreckers of its coast plundered a trading ship from York. But the aims of the Primate-minister reached far beyond this outer revival of prosperity and good government. Time and the Northern war had dealt rudely with Ælfred's hopes; his educational movement had ceased with his death, the clergy had sunk back into worldliness and ignorance, not a single book or translation had been added to those which the king had left. Dunstan resumed the task, if not in the larger spirit of Ælfred, at least in the spirit of a great administrator. He had long sympathised with the revival of the stricter monasticism which had begun in the Abbey of Clugny, and he now devoted himself to its introduction into the English cloisters. He found vigorous aid in Oswald and Æthelwold, whom he had promoted to the sees of York and Winchester; a dream showed him a tree of wondrous height stretching its branches over Britain, its boughs loaded with countless cowls, the topmost twig crowned with a cowl of larger size than all. The tree—Dunstan interpreted—was England as it was to be, the big cowl Æthelwold. The three prelates pushed the movement roughly forward, expelling the secular canons from many of the cathedrals, and founding forty new abbeys. The abbeys were schools as well as monasteries. Dunstan himself while Abbot was famous as a teacher, Ethelwold raised Abingdon into a school second only to Glastonbury. Abbo,

943 to 1016

the most notable scholar in Gaul, came from Fleury at the Primate's invitation. 892 to 1016

After times looked back fondly to "Eadgar's Law," as it was called, in other words to the English Constitution as it shaped itself in the hands of Eadgar's minister. Peace and change had greatly modified the older order which had followed on the English Conquest. Slavery was gradually disappearing before the efforts of the Church. Theodore had denied Christian burial to the kidnapper, and prohibited the sale of children by their parents after the age of seven. Ecgberht of York punished any sale of child or kinsfolk with excommunication. The murder of a slave by lord or mistress, though no crime in the eye of the State, became a sin for which penance was due to the Church. The slave was exempted from toil on Sundays and holydays; here and there he became attached to the soil, and could only be sold with it; sometimes he acquired a plot of ground, and was suffered to purchase his own release. Æthelstan gave the slave-class a new rank in the realm by extending to it the same principles of mutual responsibility for crime which were the basis of order among the free. The Church was far from contenting herself with this gradual elevation; Wilfrith led the way in the work of emancipation by freeing two hundred and fifty serfs whom he found attached to his estate at Selsey. Manumission became frequent in wills, as the clergy taught that such a gift was a boon to the soul of the dead. At the Synod of Chelsea the bishops bound themselves to free at their decease all serfs on their estates who had been reduced to serfdom by want or crime. Usually the slave was set free before the altar or in the church-porch, and the Gospel-book bore written on its margins the record of his emancipation. Sometimes his lord placed him at the spot where four roads met, and bade him go whither he would. In the more solemn form of the law his master took him by the hand in full shire-meeting, showed him open road and door, and gave him the lance and sword of the freeman. The slave-trade from English ports was prohibited by law, but the prohibition long remained ineffective. A hundred years later than Dunstan the wealth of English nobles was said sometimes to spring from breeding slaves for the market. It was not till the reign of the first Norman king that the preaching of Wulstan and the influence of Lanfranc suppressed the trade in its last stronghold, the port of Bristol.

The later Constitution

Decline of slavery

But the decrease of slavery was more than compensated by the increasing degradation of the bulk of the people. Much, indeed, of the dignity of the free farmer had depended on the contrast of his position with that of the slave; free among his equals, he was lord among his serfs. But the change from freedom to villenage, from the freeholder who knew no superior but God and the law to the tenant bound to do service to his lord, which was annihilating the old English liberty in the days of Dunstan, was owing mainly to a change in the character of English kingship. The union of the English realms had removed the king, as his dominions extended,

The later English kingdom

892 to 1016

further and further from his people, and clothed him with a mysterious dignity. Religion had told against political independence. The king became Christian and "the Lord's anointed," treason against him is punished with death; even the bishop, once his equal in life-value, sinks to the level of the ealdorman. The ealdorman himself, once the hereditary ruler of a smaller state, becomes from Ælfred's time the mere delegate of the king; his authority is curtailed by that of the royal reeves, officers despatched to levy the royal revenues and administer the royal justice. The older nobility of blood died out before the new nobility of the court. From the oldest times of Germanic history each chief or king had his war-band, his comrades, warriors bound personally to him by their free choice, sworn to fight for him to the death, and avenge his cause as their own. When Cynewulf of Wessex was foully slain at Merton his comrades "ran at once to the spot, each as he was ready and as fast as he could," and despising all offers of life, fell fighting over the corpse of their lord. The fidelity of the war-band was rewarded with grants from the royal domain; the king became their lord or hlaford, "the dispenser of gifts"; the comrade became his "servant" or thegn. Personal service with such a lord was held not to degrade, but to ennoble; "dish-thegn," and "bower-thegn," and "horse-thegn," became great officers of state. The older nobility were gradually supplanted by the new; the thegn advanced with the advance of the king; he absorbed every post of honour, and became ealdorman, reeve, bishop, judge; while the common ground of the mark now became folk-land in the hands of the king, and was carved out into estates for his dependants.

Decline of the English Freeman

With the advance of the thegn fell the freedom of the peasant. The principle of personal allegiance embodied in the new nobility widened into a theory of general dependence. By Ælfred's day it was assumed that no man could exist without a lord. The ravages and the long insecurity of the Danish wars aided to drive the free farmer to seek protection from the thegn. His freehold was surrendered to be received back as a fief, laden with service to its lord. Gradually the "lordless man" became a sort of outlaw in the realm. The free churl sank into the villein, and with his personal freedom went his share in the government of the state. Every freeman had been a legislator, in the meeting of the mark, or of the shire, or of the kingdom. In each the preliminary discussion rested with the nobler sort, the final decision with all. The clash of arms, the "yea" or "nay" of the crowd, were its vote. The union of the different kingdoms seemed only to widen and exalt the power of the English freeman, for he was by right a member of the "great meeting" as of the smaller, and in that "Assembly of the Wise" lay the rule of the realm. It could elect or depose the king. The higher justice, the imposition of taxes, the making of laws, the conclusion of treaties, the control of war, the disposal of public lands, the appointment of great officers of state, belonged to this

Witenagemot. But with this power the freeman had really less and less to do. The larger the kingdom the greater grew the distance from his home. His part in the shire-moot was necessarily less than in his own mark-moot; his share in the general deliberations of the realm dwindled to nothing. There was no election of delegates; the freeman appeared in person or not at all. The only relic of the popular character of English government lay at last in the ring of citizens who at London or Winchester gathered round the Wise Men and shouted their "ay" or "nay" at the election of a king. Practically the national council shrank into a gathering of the great officers of Church and State with the royal thegns, and the old English democracy passed into an oligarchy of the closest kind. 892 to 1016

Fall of the West-Saxon Kingdom

It is in this degradation of the class in which its true strength lay, that we must look for the cause of the ruin which already hung over the West-Saxon realm. Fresh virulence was added to the reaction against the system of Dunstan by his rough treatment of the married clergy, and the violent transfer of property which his measures necessitated. For a time the discontent was quelled by the energy of the primate; seizing his cross, he settled the dispute over Eadgar's successor by the coronation of his son Eadward, and confronted his enemies successfully in three assemblies of the Wise. In that of Calne the floor of the room gave way, and Dunstan and his friends alone remained unhurt. But not even the fame of a miracle sufficed to turn the tide. The assassination of Eadward was followed by a West-Saxon triumph, and the thegns of the south broke out in "great joy" at the coronation of his brother Æthelred. Dunstan withdrew to die at Canterbury, and with his withdrawal the artificial kingdom which his genius had built up fell at once to the ground. All hope of national union was ruined by the selfish provincialism of Wessex. The immediate resumption of Danish hostilities, the practical secession of the north, followed naturally on the accession of Æthelred. Within, the new king was at war with his clergy, and with Mercia, ravaging the see of Rochester, and driving Ælfric, the ealdorman of the former province, into temporary banishment. Execrated as traitors by the West-Saxons and their king, the Mercian earls seem to have aimed at the restoration of the old political balance, perhaps at the revival of the yet older independence which Wessex had swept away. Weakened by the ceaseless attacks of the Danes, Æthelred was forced by their coalition with the clerical party under Archbishop Sigeric, the inheritor of the policy of Dunstan, to buy a truce from the invaders and to suffer them to settle peacefully in the land. A fresh attempt to expel them threw Ælfric openly into their arms, and the kingdom of Æthelred shrank into the realms of Wessex and Kent. On these through five years fell the full fury of the Danish onset, till peace was again purchased by a heavy bribe, and by a promise to afford pay and subsistence to the Northmen who chose to settle in Wessex. But the peace only served as a screen for the basest treachery. Urged by secret orders

Eadward the Martyr 975 to 979

Æthelred the Unready 979 to 1016

997 to 1002

892 to 1016 — *Massacre of Danes* 1002

from the king, the West-Saxons rose on St. Brice's Day and pitilessly massacred the Danes scattered defencelessly among them. The tower of St. Frideswide, in which those of Oxford had taken refuge, was burnt with them to the ground. Gunhild, the sister of their King Swegen, a Christian convert, and one of the hostages for the peace, saw husband and child butchered before her eyes ere she fell threatening vengeance on her murderers. Swegen swore at the news to wrest England from Æthelred. For

1003 to 1007

four years he marched through the length and breadth of Wessex, "lighting his war-beacons as he went" in blazing homestead and town. Then for a heavy bribe he withdrew, to prepare for a later and more terrible onset. But there was no rest for the realm. The fiercest of the Norwegian jarls took his place, and from Wessex the war extended over Mercia and East-Anglia. Canterbury was

1011

taken and sacked, Ælfheah the Archbishop dragged to Greenwich, and there, in default of ransom, brutally slain. The Danes set him in the midst of their husting, pelting him with bones and skulls of oxen, till one more pitiful than the rest clove his skull with an axe.

It was not so much the imbecility of Æthelred which paralysed the struggle against the Danes as the practical secession of England north of the Thames, and when this Northern England passed from inactivity to active effort the struggle was over in a moment. Northumbria and Mercia at last threw themselves with Swegen on Wessex. The war was terrible but short. Everywhere the country was pitilessly harried, churches plundered, men slaughtered. But, with the one exception of London, there was no attempt at resistance. Oxford and Winchester flung open their gates. The thegns of Wessex submitted to the Northmen at Bath. Even London was forced at last to give way, and Æthelred fled over sea to a refuge in Normandy. With the flight of the king ends the long struggle of Wessex for supremacy over Britain. The task which had baffled the energies of Eadwine and Offa proved too hard for the valour of Eadward and the statesmanship of Dunstan. Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria remained separate political bodies which no efforts of force or policy seemed able to fuse into one.

The statement in the text that the treaty negotiated by Oda and Wulfstan restored "the old balance of Ælfred's day" rests upon a passage in Symeon of Durham. It can hardly be regarded as representing the actual fact; the truth appears to be that the treaty recognised the creation of Deira as a sub-kingdom, under the Dane, Anlaf, while the Five Boroughs remained under the rule of Eadmund.

CHAPTER II

ENGLAND UNDER FOREIGN KINGS

1013—1204

Section I.—The Danish Kings

[*Authorities.*—The primary authorities are the English Chronicle and the compilation of Florence of Worcester. The "Encomium Emmæ" ("Mon. Hist. Germ.") is a panegyric on the wife of Æthelred and Cnut. Modern authorities are the works, already cited, of Lappenberg, Ramsay, Stubbs, and Oman, and the "Political History of England."]

Britain had become England in the five hundred years that followed the landing of Hengest, and its conquest had ended in the settlement of its conquerors, in their conversion to Christianity, in the birth of a national literature, of an imperfect civilization, of a rough political order. But through the whole of this earlier age every attempt to fuse the various tribes of conquerors into a single nation had failed. The effort of Northumbria to extend her rule over all England had been foiled by the resistance of Mercia, that of Mercia by the resistance of Wessex. Wessex itself, even under the guidance of great kings and statesmen, had no sooner reduced the country to a seeming unity than local independence rose again at the call of the Danes. The tide of supremacy rolled in fact backwards and forwards; now the South won lordship over the North, now the North won lordship over the South. But whatever titles Kings might assume, or however imposing their rule might appear, Northumbrian remained apart from West-Saxon, Dane from Englishman. A common national sympathy held the country roughly together, but a real national union had yet to come. The foreign rule

Through the two hundred years that lie between the flight of Æthelred from England to Normandy and that of John from Normandy to England our story is a story of foreign rule. Kings from Denmark were succeeded by Kings from Normandy, and these by Kings from Anjou. Under Dane, Norman, or Angevin, Englishmen were a subject race, conquered and ruled by foreign masters, and yet it was in these years of slavery that England really became the England that we know. Provincial differences were crushed into national unity by the pressure of the stranger. The same pressure redressed the wrong which had been done to the fabric of national society by the degradation of the free farmer at the close of the preceding age into a feudal dependant on his lord. The English lord himself was pushed from his place by the barons of the Conquest, and sank into the position from which he had thrust the churl. The middle class, thus created, was reinforced by the rise

1013 to 1042

of a similar class in our towns; commerce and trade were promoted by the justice and policy of the Kings, and with their progress rose the political importance of the trader. The boroughs of England, which at the opening of this period were for the most part mere villages, were rich enough at its close to buy liberty from the Crown. Rights of self-government, of free speech, of common deliberation, which had passed under the later rule of our English Sovereigns from the people at large into the hands of its nobles, and from them at the Conquest into the hands of the Crown, revived in the charters and councils of the towns. A moral revival followed hard on this political development. The occupation of every see and abbacy by strangers who could only speak to their flocks in an unknown tongue converted religion from a superstition into a reality as it passed from the priest to the people, and hermit and friar carried spiritual life home to the heart of the nation at large. At the same time the close connection with the Continent which necessarily resulted from the foreign origin of our sovereigns secured for their realm a free communion with the intellectual and artistic life of the world around. The old mental stagnation was at once broken up, and art and literature covered England with great buildings and busy schools. Time for this varied progress was gained by the long peace which England owed to the firm government of her Kings, while their political ability gave her administrative order, and their judicial reforms built up the fabric of her law. In a word, it is to the stern discipline of these two hundred years that we owe not merely English wealth and English freedom, but England itself.

Our Danish Kings

The first of our foreign masters was the Dane. The countries of Scandinavia which had so long been the mere starting-points of the pirate-bands who had ravaged England and Ireland were now settling down into comparative order. It was the aim of Swegen to unite them in a great Scandinavian Empire, of which England should be the head, and this project, interrupted for a time by his death, was resumed with yet greater vigour by his son Cnut. Fear of the Dane was still great in the land, and Cnut had no sooner appeared off the English coast than the wise men of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumberland joined in owning him for their lord, and in discarding again the rule of Æthelred, who had returned on the death of Swegen. With the sole support of London and part of Wessex, and for a time that of Mercia, Eadmund Ironside, the son and successor of Æthelred, who passed away at the opening of the new contest, struggled for a few months against the Danish forces; but a decisive victory at Assandun and the death of his rival left Cnut master of the realm. Conqueror as he was, the Dane was no foreigner in the sense that the Norman was a foreigner after him. His language differed little from the English tongue. He brought in no new system of tenure or government. Cnut ruled, in fact, not as a conqueror but as a king. The goodwill and tranquillity of England was necessary, in fact, for the success of his larger

Cnut

schemes in the North, where the arms of his English subjects aided him in uniting Denmark, Norway, and Sweden beneath his sway. Dismissing therefore his Danish "host," and retaining only a trained body of household troops, the hus-carls, to serve in sudden emergencies, Cnut boldly relied for support within his realm on the justice and good government he secured it. His aim during twenty years seems to have been to obliterate from men's minds the foreign character of his rule, and the bloodshed in which it had begun. The change in himself was as startling as the change in his policy. When he first appears in England, it is as the mere Northman, passionate, revengeful, uniting the guile of the savage with his thirst for blood. His first acts of government were a series of murders. Eadric of Mercia, whose aid had given him the crown, was no sooner useless than at a sign from Cnut he was felled by an axe-blow in the King's presence. A similar assassination removed Eadwig, the brother of Eadmund Ironside. Eadmund himself was believed to have been poisoned by the King's agents, while his children were hunted even into Hungary by his ruthless hate. From a mere savage such as this Cnut rose abruptly into the wise and temperate king. Stranger as he was, he deliberately fell back on the older policy of Dunstan; and while restoring "Eadgar's law," the constitution which secured a separate political existence to North and South alike, he acknowledged no difference between conqueror and conquered, between Dane and Englishman. By the erection of four Earldoms, those of Mercia, Northumberland, Wessex, and East Anglia, he recognized provincial independence, but he drew closer than of old the ties which bound the rulers of these great dependencies to the Crown. His attitude towards national feeling was yet nobler. The Church had been the centre of national resistance to the Dane, but Cnut sought above all its friendship. He paid homage to the cause for which Ælfheah had died, by his translation of the Archbishop's body to Canterbury. He atoned for his father's ravages by costly gifts to the religious houses. He protected English pilgrims against the robber-lords of the Alps, and English bishops against the exactions of the Papacy. His love for the monks broke out in the song which he composed as he listened to their chaunt at Ely: "Merrily sung the monks of Ely when Cnut King rowed by" across the vast fen-waters that surrounded their abbey. "Row, boatmen, near the land, and hear we these monks sing."

1013 to 1042

1016 to 1035

Cnut's letter from Rome to his English subjects marks the grandeur of his character, and the noble conception he had formed of kingship. "I have vowed to God to lead a right life in all things," wrote the King, "to rule justly and piously my realms and subjects, and to administer just judgment to all. If heretofore I have done aught beyond what was just, through headiness or negligence of youth, I am ready, with God's help, to amend it utterly." No royal officer, either for fear of the King or for favour of any, is to consent to injustice, none is to do wrong to rich or

1013 to 1042

poor, "as they would value my friendship and their own well-being." He especially denounces unfair exactions: "I have no need that money be heaped together for me by unjust demands." "I have sent this letter before me," Cnut ends, "that all the people of my realm may rejoice in my well-doing; for as you yourselves know, never have I spared, nor will I spare, to spend myself and my toil in what is needful and good for my people."

England at peace

Cnut's greatest gift to his people was that of peace. With him began the long internal tranquillity which marked the rule of our foreign masters. During two hundred years, with the one terrible interval of the Norman Conquest, and the long disturbance under Stephen, England alone among the kingdoms of Europe enjoyed unbroken repose. The wars of her Kings lay far from her shores, in France or Normandy, or, as with Cnut, in the more distant lands of the North. The stern justice of their government secured order within. The absence of internal discontent under Cnut, perhaps too the exhaustion of the kingdom after the terrible Danish inroads, is proved by its quiet during his frequent periods of absence. Even the oppressive Forest Laws, which have been falsely ascribed to him, witness indirectly to the growing wealth and prosperity. The greater part of English soil was still utterly uncultivated. A good third of the land was probably covered with wood, thicket, or scrub; another third consisted of heaths and moor. In both the East and the West there were vast tracts of marsh land; fens nearly one hundred miles long severed East Anglia from the midland counties; sites like that of Glastonbury or Athelney were almost inaccessible. The bustard roamed over the downs, the beaver still haunted Beverley, huntsmen roused the bear in its forest lair, the London craftsmen chased the wild boar and the wild ox in the woods of Hampstead, while wolves prowled round the homesteads of the North. Forest Law proves that peace, and the industry it encouraged, were already telling on this waste. Protection for the "wild deer" could only be thought of when stag and bittern were retreating before the face of man, when the farmer's axe was ringing in the forest, and villages springing up in the clearings.

The Forest Laws

But the King lost more than his hunting as the forest shrank into narrower bounds. He lost power. The common law ran only where the plough ran. Marsh and moor and woodland knew no master but the King, no law but his absolute will; and it was this will which was embodied long after Cnut's time in the form of Forest Law.

Fall of the Danish rule

Cnut's reign began a struggle between king and people, which we shall see raging through two centuries of our history, but it began it unconsciously. Cnut's one aim was to win the love of his people, and all tradition shows how wonderful was his success. But the Danish rule ended with his death. Denmark and England, parted for a few years by the accession of his son Harold to the throne of the last, were re-united under a second son, Harthacnut; but the love which Cnut's justice had won turned to hatred before the

Harold 1035 to 1039

lawlessness of his successors. The long peace sickened men of this fresh outburst of bloodshed and violence. "Never was a bloodier deed done in the land since the Danes came," ran the popular song, when Harold's men seized Ælfred, the brother of Eadmund Ironside, who had attacked England from Normandy. Every tenth man was killed, the rest sold for slaves, and Ælfred's eyes torn out at Ely. Harthacnut, more savage even than his predecessor, dug up his brother's body and flung it into a marsh; while a rising at Worcester against his hus-carls was punished by the burning of the town and the pillage of the shire. His death was no less brutal than his life; "he died as he stood at his drink in the house of Osgod Clapa at Lambeth." England wearied of kings like these: but their crimes helped her to free herself from the impossible dream of Cnut. The North, still more barbarous than herself, could give her no new element of progress or civilization. It was the consciousness of this, and the hatred of such rulers as Harold and Harthacnut, which co-operated with the old feelings of reverence for the past in calling back the line of Ælfred to the throne.

1013 to 1042 — *Harthacnut* 1040 to 1042

The account in the text of Cnut's earldoms is liable to create a certain misunderstanding. Cnut did not originate the idea of earls, who are found in the reign of Edgar, even if they did not exist at an earlier date. Cnut appointed "earls" over four districts, which were somewhat indefinite in area, but which may be described as Bernicia, Deira, East Anglia, and Mercia; Wessex he, at first, retained in his own hand, though at a later date Godwine secured in it the position of an earl. As to Godwine, it may be noted that his complicity in the murder of the atheling Ælfred is hardly doubtful; cp. Oman, "History of England before the Norman Conquest."

Section II.—The English Restoration, 1042—1066

[*Authorities.*—The English Chronicle in this period assumed a different character, important divergencies appearing between the various texts. The Lives of Edward the Confessor have been edited in the Rolls Series. The Norman historians become valuable on the eve of the Conquest. Modern authorities as under the previous section, with the addition of Freeman, "History of the Norman Conquest."]

It is in such transitional moments of a nation's history as this that it needs the cool prudence, the sensitive selfishness, the quick perception of what is possible, which distinguished the adroit politician whom the death of Cnut left supreme in England. Godwine is memorable in our history as the first English statesman who was neither king nor priest. Originally of obscure origin, his ability had raised him high in the royal favour; he was allied to the King by marriage, and entrusted by him with the earldom of Wessex. In the wars of Scandinavia he had shown courage and skill at the head of a body of English troops who supported Cnut, but his true field of action lay at home. Shrewd, eloquent, Godwine

1042 to 1066

an active administrator, Godwine united vigilance, industry, and caution with a singular dexterity in the management of men. During the troubled years that followed the death of Cnut he had done his best to continue his master's policy in securing the internal union of England under a Danish sovereign and in preserving her connection with the North. But at the death of Harthacnut Cnut's policy had become impossible, and abandoning the Danish cause Godwine drifted with the tide of popular feeling which called Eadward to the throne.

Eadward the Confessor 1042 to 1066

Eadward the son of Æthelred had lived from his youth in exile at the court of Normandy. A halo of tenderness spread in after-time round this last King of the old English stock; legends told of his pious simplicity, his blitheness and gentleness of mood, the holiness that gained him his name of "Confessor" and enshrined him as a saint in his abbey-church at Westminster. Gleemen sang in manlier tones of the long peace and glories of his reign, how warriors and wise councillors stood round his throne, and Welsh and Scot and Briton obeyed him. His was the one figure that stood out bright against the darkness when England lay trodden under foot by Norman conquerors; and so dear became his memory that liberty and independence itself seemed incarnate in his name. Instead of freedom, the subject of William or Henry called for the "good laws of Eadward the Confessor." But it was as a mere shadow of the past that the exile really returned to the throne of Ælfred; there was something shadow-like in the thin form, the delicate complexion, the transparent womanly hands that contrasted with the blue eyes and golden hair of his race; and it is almost as a shadow that he glides over the political stage. The work of government was done by sterner hands. The King's weakness left Godwine master of the realm, and he ruled firmly and wisely. Abandoning with reluctance all interference in Scandinavian politics, he guarded England with a fleet which cruised year by year along the coast. Within, though the earldoms still remained jealously independent, there were signs that a real political unity was being slowly brought about; the royal writs "ran," as the phrase went, to the furthest borders of Mercia and Northumbria.

Fall of Godwine

It was indeed the increasing sense of order and law, the growing moral consciousness of Englishmen that brought about Godwine's fall. He alone stood untouched by the religious movement of his time, by the enthusiasm which showed itself in monastic foundations or superstitious piety or a stricter administration of Church patronage. Godwine was the founder of no religious house: he was the plunderer, as every monk believed, of many. His whole mind seemed set on the aggrandizement of his family. He had given his daughter to the King as wife. His own earldom embraced all England south of Thames. His son Harold was Earl of East Anglia, while Mercia had been dismembered to provide another earldom for his son Swegen. It was Swegen's lawlessness which roused

an ill-will that all this greed and ambition would hardly have excited. He had seduced the abbess of Leominster, had sent her home again with a yet more outrageous demand of her hand in marriage, and on the King's refusal to grant it had fled from the realm. Godwine's influence secured his pardon, but on his very return to seek it Swegen kidnapped and murdered his cousin Beorn, who had opposed the reconciliation. He again fled to Flanders, and a storm of national indignation followed him over sea. The meeting of the Wise men branded him as "nithing," the "utterly worthless," yet in a year his father had again wrested a pardon from the King and restored him to his earldom. The scandalous inlawing of such a criminal left Godwine alone in a struggle which soon arose with Eadward himself. The King was, as we have seen, a stranger in his realm, and his sympathies lay naturally with the home and friends of his youth and exile. He spoke the Norman tongue. He used in Norman fashion a seal for his charters. He set Norman favourites in the highest posts of Church and State. Strangers such as these, though hostile to the minister, were powerless against Godwine's influence and ability, and when at a later time they ventured to stand alone against him they fell without a blow. But the general ill-will enabled them at this moment to stir Eadward to attack the Earl. A quarrel brought the opportunity. On his return from a visit to the Court, Eustace Count of Boulogne, the husband of the King's sister, demanded quarters for his train in Dover. Strife arose, and many both of the burghers and foreigners were slain. All Godwine's better nature withstood Eadward, when the King angrily bade him exact vengeance from the town for the affront to his kinsman; but he claimed a fair trial for the townsmen only to find himself arraigned with them as a criminal. He at once gathered his forces and marched upon Gloucester, demanding the expulsion of the foreign favourites; but even in a just quarrel the country was cold in his support. The Earls of Mercia and Northumberland united their forces to those of Eadward, and in a gathering of Wise men at London Swegen's outlawry was renewed, while Godwine, declining with his usual prudence a useless struggle, withdrew over sea to Flanders.

1042 to 1066

Exile of Godwine 1051

But the wrath of the nation was appeased by his fall. Great as were Godwine's faults, he was the one man who now stood between England and the rule of the strangers who flocked to the Court; and a year had hardly passed when at the appearance of his fleet in the Thames Eadward was once more forced to yield. The foreign prelates and bishops fled over sea, outlawed by the same meeting of the Wise men which restored Godwine to his home. He returned only to die, and the direction of affairs passed quietly to his son.

1052

Earl Harold 1053 to 1065

Harold came to power unfettered by the obstacles which had beset his father, and for twelve years he was the actual governor of the realm. The courage, the ability, the genius for administration,

1042 to 1066

the ambition and subtlety of Godwine were found again in his son. In the internal government of England he followed out his father's policy, while avoiding its excesses. Peace was preserved, justice administered, and the realm increased in wealth and prosperity. Its gold work and embroidery were famous in the markets of Flanders and France. But it was a prosperity poor in the nobler elements of national activity, and dead to the more vivid influences of spiritual life. Literature, which on the Continent was kindling into a new activity, died down in England into a few psalters and homilies. The few ministers raised by king or earls contrasted strangely with the religious enthusiasm which was covering Normandy and the Rhineland with stately buildings. National history there was none. Harold's temper harmonized singularly with the temper of his times. His whole statesmanship seemed to aim at inaction and repose. Disturbances from without he could crush sternly and rapidly; his military talents displayed themselves in a campaign against Wales, and in the boldness and rapidity with which, arming his troops with weapons adapted for mountain conflict, he penetrated to the heart of its fastnesses and reduced the country to complete submission. But good influences were kept at bay as firmly as evil. The Church sank into lethargy. Monasticism was the one religious power of the time, and Harold, like his father, hated monks. Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was the adherent of an antipope, and the highest dignity of the English Church was deliberately kept in a state of suspension. No ecclesiastical synod, no Church reform, broke the slumbers of its clergy. Abroad Europe was waking to a new revival of literature, of art, of religion, but England was all but severed from the Continent. Like Godwine, Harold's energy seemed to devote itself wholly to self-aggrandizement. As the childless Eadward drew to the grave his minister drew closer and closer to the throne. One obstacle after another was swept from his path. The rival house of Mercia was humbled by the exile of Earl Ælfgar; a revolt of the Northumbrians, whether prompted by Harold or not, drove Tostig, his brother and most dangerous opponent, to Flanders. His aim was attained without a struggle, and the nobles and bishops who were gathered round the deathbed of the Confessor passed quietly at once from it to the election and coronation of Harold.

Death of Eadward *Jan.* 1066

Section III.—Normandy and the Normans, 912—1066

912 to 1066

[*Authorities.*—The chief sources for the early history of Normandy are Dudo of Saint Quentin (edited Lair), and William of Jumièges, his continuator (" Hist. Norm. Scriptores "). For ecclesiastical history, see Ordericus Vitalis (Société de l'Histoire de France), and the works of Lanfranc (edited Giles) and Anselm (edited Migne, " Pat. Lat."). Among modern works may be mentioned Labutte, " Histoire des ducs de Normandie "; Freeman, " History of the Norman Conquest "; and Church, " Life of Saint Anselm."]

Normandy

But the quiet of Harold's accession was at once broken by news of danger from a land which, strange as it seemed then, was soon to become almost a part of England itself. A walk through Normandy teaches one more of the age of our history which we are about to traverse than all the books in the world. The whole story of the Conquest stands written in the stately vault of the minster at Caen which still covers the tomb of the Conqueror. The name of each hamlet by the roadside has its memories for English ears; a fragment of castle wall marks the home of the Bruce, a tiny little village preserves the name of the Percy. The very look of the country and its people seem familiar to us; the peasant in his cap and blouse recalls the build and features of the small English farmer; the fields about Caen, with their dense hedgerows, their elms, their apple-orchards, are the very picture of an English country-side. On the windy heights around rise the square grey keeps which Normandy handed on to the cliffs of Richmond or the banks of Thames, while huge cathedrals lift themselves over the red-tiled roof of little market towns, the models of the stately fabrics which superseded the lowlier churches of Ælfred or Dunstan.

The Norman settlement

Peace of Clair-sur-Epte 912

Rolf the Ganger, or Walker, a pirate leader like Guthrum or Hasting, had wrested the land on either side the mouth of Seine from the French king, Charles the Simple, at the moment when Ælfred's children, Eadward and Æthelfled, were beginning their conquest of the English Danelagh. The treaty in which France purchased peace by this cession of the coast was a close imitation of the Peace of Wedmore. Rolf, like Guthrum, was baptized, received the King's daughter in marriage, and became his vassal for the territory which now took the name of " the Northman's land " or Normandy. But vassalage and the new faith sat alike lightly on the Dane. No such ties of blood and speech tended to unite the Northman with the French among whom he settled along the Seine, as united him to the Englishmen among whom he settled along the Humber. William Longsword, the son of Rolf, though wavering towards France and Christianity, remained Pagan and Dane in heart; he called in a Danish colony to occupy his conquest of the Cotentin, the peninsula which runs out from St. Michael's Mount to the cliffs of Cherbourg, and reared his boy

912 to 1066

among the Northmen of Bayeux, where the Danish tongue and fashions most stubbornly held their own. A heathen reaction followed his death, and the bulk of the Normans, with the child Duke Richard, fell away for the time from Christianity, while new pirate-fleets came swarming up the Seine. To the close of the century the whole people are still "Pirates" to the French around them, their land the "Pirates' land," their Duke the "Pirates' Duke."

Civilization of Normandy

Yet in the end the same forces which merged the Dane in the Englishman told even more powerfully on the Dane in France. No race has ever shown a greater power of absorbing all the nobler characteristics of the peoples with whom they came in contact, or of infusing their own energy into them. During the long reign of Duke Richard the Fearless, the son of William Longsword,

945 to 996

heathen Norman pirates became French Christians, and feudal at heart. The old Norse language lived only at Bayeux, and in a few names, such as those of "dale" and "bec," the dell and the stream, which marked the local features of the country. As the old Norse freedom died silently away, the descendants of the pirates became feudal nobles and the "pirates' land" sank into the most loyal of the fiefs of France. The change of manners was accompanied by an even sharper change of faith, a change which bound the land where heathendom had fought most stubbornly for life more closely than other lands to the cause of Christianity and the Church. The Dukes were the first to be touched by the new faith, but the religious movement had no sooner spread to the people than it was welcomed with an almost passionate fanaticism. Every road was crowded with pilgrims. Monasteries

Herlouin

rose in every forest glade. Herlouin, a knight of Brionne, sought shelter from the world in a little valley edged in with woods of

Bec

ash and elm, through which a beck or rivulet (to which his house owed its after-name) runs down to the Risle. He was one day busy building an oven with his own hands when a stranger greeted him with "God save you!" "Are you a Lombard?" asked the knight-abbot, struck with the foreign look of the man. "I am," he replied, and praying to be made a monk the stranger fell down at the mouth

Lanfranc at Bec 1045 to 1060

of the oven and kissed Herlouin's feet. The Lombard was Lanfranc of Pavia, a scholar of noble family and especially skilled in the traditions of the Roman law, who had wandered across the Alps to found a school at Avranches, and was now drawn to a religious life by the fame of Herlouin's sanctity. The religious impulse was a real one, but Lanfranc was destined to be known rather as a great administrator and statesman than as a saint. His teaching raised Bec, in a few years, into the most famous school of Christendom; it was in fact the first wave of the intellectual movement which was spreading from Italy to the ruder countries of the West. The whole mental activity of the time seemed concentrated in the group of scholars who gathered round him; the fabric of the canon law and of mediæval scholasticism, with the philosophical

scepticism which first awoke under its influence, all trace their origin to Bec. 912 to 1066

The most famous of these scholars was Anselm of Aosta, an Italian like Lanfranc himself, and who was soon to succeed him as Prior and teacher at Bec. Friends as they were, no two men could be more strangely unlike. Anselm had grown to manhood in the quiet solitude of his mountain-valley, a tender-hearted poet-dreamer, with a soul pure as the Alpine snows above him, and an intelligence keen and clear as the mountain air. The whole temper of the man was painted in a dream of his youth. It seemed to him as though heaven lay, a stately palace, amid the gleaming hill-peaks, while the women reaping in the corn-fields of the valley became harvest-maidens of its heavenly King. They reaped idly, and Anselm, grieved at their sloth, hastily climbed the mountain side to accuse them to their lord. As he reached the palace, the King's voice called him to his feet, and he poured forth his tale; then at the royal bidding bread of an unearthly whiteness was set before him, and he ate and was refreshed. The dream passed with the morning, but the sense of heaven's nearness to earth, the fervid loyalty to the service of his Lord, the tender restfulness and peace in the Divine presence which it reflected, became the life of Anselm. Wandering, like other Italian scholars, to Normandy, he became a monk under Lanfranc, and on his teacher's removal to higher duties succeeded him in the direction of the Abbey of Bec. No teacher has ever thrown a greater spirit of love into his toil. "Force your scholars to improve!" he burst out to another teacher who relied on blows and compulsion. "Did you ever see a craftsman fashion a fair image out of a golden plate by blows alone? Does he not now gently press it and strike it with his tools, now with wise art yet more gently raise and shape it? What do your scholars turn into under this ceaseless beating?" "They turn only brutal," was the reply. "You have bad luck," was the keen answer, "in a training that only turns men into beasts." The worst natures softened before this tenderness and patience. Even the Conqueror, so harsh and terrible to others, became another man, gracious and easy of speech, with Anselm. Anselm 1060

But amidst his absorbing cares as a teacher, the Prior of Bec found time for philosophical speculations, to which we owe the great scientific inquiries which built up the theology of the middle ages. His famous works were the first attempts of any Christian thinker to elicit the idea of God from the very nature of the human reason. His passion for abstruse thought robbed him of food and sleep. Sometimes he could hardly pray. Often the night was a long watch till he could seize his conception and write it on the wax tablets which lay beside him. But not even a fever of intense thought such as this could draw Anselm's heart from its passionate tenderness and love. Sick monks in the infirmary could relish no drink save the juice which his hand had squeezed for them from the grape-bunch. In the later days of his archbishopric a hare

1042 to 1066 chased by the hounds took refuge under his horse, and his voice grew loud as he forbade a huntsman to stir in the chase, while the creature darted off again to the woods. Even the greed of lands for the Church to which so many religious men yielded found its characteristic rebuke, as the battling lawyers saw Anselm quietly close his eyes in court, and go peacefully to sleep.

Section IV.—The Conqueror, 1042—1066

[*Authorities.*—William of Jumièges is here strictly contemporary and of great value. William of Poitiers, "Gesta Willelmi" ("Hist. Norm. Scriptores"), is a panegyric by the Conqueror's chaplain. For the battle of Hastings, the Bayeux Tapestry is invaluable, and there may be also mentioned Guy of Amiens, "De Bello Hastingensi Carmen" (edited Petrie). Freeman, "Norman Conquest," supplies a detailed account of the invasion which, in some respects, has been attacked by Round, "Feudal England."]

The Conquests of the Normans

It was not this new fervour of faith only which drove Norman pilgrims in flocks to the shrines of Italy and the Holy Land. The old Norse spirit of adventure turned the pilgrims into Crusaders, and the flower of Norman knighthood, impatient of the stern rule of their Dukes, followed Roger de Toesny against the Moslem of Spain, or enlisted under the banner of the Greeks in their war with the Arabs who had conquered Sicily. The Normans became conquerors under Robert Guiscard, a knight who had left his home in the Cotentin with a single follower, but whose valour and wisdom soon placed him at the head of his fellow-soldiers in Italy. Attacking the Greeks, whom they had hitherto served, the Norman knights wrested Apulia from them in an overthrow at Cannæ, Guiscard himself led them to the conquest of Calabria and the great trading cities of the coast, while thirty years of warfare gave Sicily to the followers of his brother Roger. The two conquests were united under a line of princes to whose munificence art owes the splendour of Palermo and Monreale, and literature the first outburst of Italian song. Normandy, still seething with vigorous life, was stirred to greed and enterprise by this plunder of the South, and the rumour of Guiscard's exploits roused into more ardent life the daring ambition of its Duke.

1054 to 1080

1060 to 1090

William of Normandy

William the Great, as men of his own day styled him, William the Conqueror, as by one event he stamped himself on our history, was now Duke of Normandy. The full grandeur of his indomitable will, his large and patient statesmanship, the loftiness of aim which lifts him out of the petty incidents of his age, had still to be disclosed. But there never was a moment from his boyhood when he was not among the greatest of men. His life was one long mastering of difficulty after difficulty. The shame of his birth remained in his name of "the Bastard." His father, Duke Robert, had seen Arletta, the daughter of a tanner of the town, washing her linen in the little brook beneath the cliff of Falaise, and loving

1027

her had made her the mother of his boy. Robert's departure on a pilgrimage from which he never returned left William a child-ruler among the most turbulent baronage in Christendom, and treason and anarchy surrounded him as he grew to manhood. Disorder broke at last into open revolt. Surprised in his hunting-seat at Valognes by the rising of the Bessin and Cotentin districts, in which the Norse temper and lawlessness lingered longest, William had only time to dash through the fords of Vire with the rebels in his track. A fierce combat of horse on the slopes of Val-ès-dunes, to the south-eastward of Caen, left him master of the Duchy, and the old Scandinavian Normandy yielded for ever to the new civilization which streamed in with French alliances and the French tongue. William was himself a type of the transition. In the young Duke's character the old world mingled strangely with the new, the pirate jostled roughly with the statesman. William was the most terrible, as he was the last outcome of the Northern race. The very spirit of the sea-wolves who had so long lived on the pillage of the world seemed embodied in his gigantic form, his enormous strength, his savage countenance, his desperate bravery, the fury of his wrath, the ruthlessness of his revenge. "No knight under heaven," his enemies confessed, "was William's peer." Boy as he was, horse and man went down before his lance at Val-ès-dunes. All the gaiety of his fierce nature broke out in the chivalrous adventures of his youth, in his rout of fifteen Angevins with but five soldiers at his back, in his defiant ride over the disputed ground, hawk on fist, as though war and the chase were one. No man could bend his bow. His mace crashed its way through a ring of English warriors to the foot of the Standard. He rose to his greatest heights in moments when other men despaired. His voice rang out like a trumpet to rally his soldiers as they fled before the first English charge at Senlac. In his winter march on Chester he dismounted to put himself at the head of his fainting troops, and helped with his own hands to clear a road through the snowdrifts. With the Norse daring broke out the Norse cruelty. His vengeance had no touch of human pity. When the revolted townsmen of Alençon hung out raw hides along their walls in scorn of the baseness of his birth, with cries of "Work for the Tanner!" William tore out the eyes of the prisoners he had taken, cut off their hands and feet, and flung them into the town. At the close of his greatest victory he refused Harold's body a grave. Thousands of Hampshire peasants were driven from their homes to make him a hunting-ground, and his harrying of Northumbria left the north of England a waste for a hundred years. There is a grim, ruthless ring about his very jests. In his old age Philip of France mocked at the Conqueror's unwieldy bulk, and at the sickness which confined him to his bed at Rouen. "King William has as long a lying-in," laughed his enemy, "as a woman behind her curtains!" "When I get up," swore William, "I will go to mass in Philip's land, and bring a rich offering for my churching.

1042 to 1066

1047

1042 to 1066 I will offer a thousand candles for my fee. Flaming brands shall they be, and steel shall glitter over the fire they make." At harvest tide, town and hamlet flaring into ashes along the French border fulfilled the Conqueror's vow. There is the same savage temper in the loneliness of his life. He recked little of men's love or hate. His grim look, his pride, his silence, his wild outbursts of passion, spread terror through his court. "Stark man he was, and great awe men had of him," was the comment of his subjects on his death. His graciousness to Anselm only brought out into stronger relief the general harshness of his tone. His very wrath was solitary. "To no man spake he, and no man dared speak to him," when the news reached him of Harold's accession to the throne. He found society only when he passed from the palace to the loneliness of the woods. "He loved the wild deer as though he had been their father. Whosoever should slay hart or hind man should blind him." Death itself took its colour from the savage solitude of his life. Priests and nobles fled as the last breath left him, and the Conqueror's body lay naked and lonely on the floor.

William and France It was the genius of William which lifted him out of this mere Norseman into the greatest general and statesman of his time. The growth of the Norman power was jealously watched by Geoffry Martel, the Count of Anjou, and his influence succeeded in converting France from friend to foe. The danger changed William at once from the chivalrous knight-errant of Val-ès-dunes into a wary strategist. As the French army crossed the border he hung cautiously on its flanks, till a division which had encamped in the little town of Mortemer had been surprised and cut to pieces by his

1054 soldiers. A second division was still held at bay by the Duke himself, when Ralph de Toesny, climbing up into a tree, shouted to them the news of their comrades' fall. "Up, up, Frenchmen! you sleep too long: go bury your friends that lie slain at Mortemer." A second and more formidable invasion four years later was met with the same cautious strategy. William hung on the Frenchmen's flank, looking coolly on while town and abbey

1058 were plundered, the Bessin ravaged, Caen sacked, and the invaders prepared to cross the Dive and carry fire and sword into the rich land of Lisieux. But only half the army was over the river when the Duke fell suddenly upon its rear. The fight raged till the rising of the tide cut the French forces, as William had foreseen, hopelessly in two. Huddled together on a narrow causeway, swept by the Norman arrows, knights, footmen, and baggage train were involved in the same ruin. Not a man escaped, and the French king, who had been forced to look on helplessly from the opposite

1060 bank, fled home to die. The death of Geoffry Martel left William without a rival among the princes of France. Maine, the border land between Normandy and Angevin, and which had for the last ten years been held by Anjou, submitted without a struggle to his rule. Brittany, which had joined the league of his foes, was reduced to submission by a single march.

All this activity abroad was far from distracting the Duke's attention from Normandy itself. It was hard to secure peace and order in a land filled with turbulent robber-lords. "The Norman must be trodden down and kept under foot," said one of their poets, "and he who bridles them may use them at his need." William "could never love a robber." His stern protection of trader and peasant roused the baronage through his first ten years to incessant revolt. His very kinsfolk headed the discontent, and summoned the French King to their aid. But the victories of Mortemer and Varaville left the rebels at his mercy. Some rotted in his dungeons, for "stark" as he was the Duke abhorred bloodshed; some were driven into exile, and joined the conquerors of Apulia and Sicily. The land settled down into peace and order, and William turned to the reform of the Church. Malger, the Archbishop of Rouen, a mere hunting and feasting prelate, was summarily deposed, and his place filled by Maurilius, a French ecclesiastic of piety and learning. Frequent councils under the Duke's guidance amended the morals of the clergy. The school of Bec, as we have seen, had become a centre of education; and William, with the keen insight into men which formed so marked a feature in his genius, selected its Prior as his chief adviser. In a strife with the Papacy which the Duke had provoked by his marriage with Matilda of Flanders, Lanfranc had shown himself an ardent partisan of Rome, and his opposition had been punished by a sentence of banishment. The Prior set out on a lame horse, the only one his house could afford, and was overtaken by the Duke, impatient that he should quit Normandy. "Give me a better horse and I shall go the quicker," replied the imperturbable Lombard, and the Duke's wrath passed into laughter and good-will. From that hour Lanfranc became his minister and counsellor, whether for the affairs of the Church or the more daring schemes of foreign oppression which were opened up to him by the position of England.

1042 to 1066 — William and Normandy

Quarrel after quarrel had for half a century been drawing the two countries nearer together. At the close of the reign of Richard the Fearless the Danish descents upon the English coast had found support in Normandy, and their fleet had wintered in her ports. It was to revenge these attacks that Ethelred had despatched a fleet across the Channel to ravage the Cotentin, but the fleet was repulsed and the strife appeased by Æthelred's marriage with Emma, a sister of Richard the Good. Æthelred with his children found shelter in Normandy from the Danish kings, and, if Norman accounts are to be trusted, contrary winds alone prevented a Norman fleet from undertaking their restoration. The peaceful recall of Eadward to the throne seemed to open England to Norman ambition, and Godwine was no sooner banished than Duke William appeared at the English court, and received, as he afterwards asserted, a promise of succession to its throne from the King. Such a promise, unconfirmed by the national assembly of the Wise men, was utterly valueless, and for the moment Godwine's

England and the Normans

1002

1042 to 1066

recall put an end to William's hopes. They were revived by a storm which threw Harold, while cruising in the Channel, on the French coast, and forced him to swear on the relics of the saint to support the Duke's claim as the price of his own return to England: but the news of the King's death was at once followed by that of Harold's accession, and after a burst of furious passion the Duke prepared to enforce his claim by arms. William did not in any strict sense claim the crown. He claimed simply the right which he afterwards used, when his sword had won it, of presenting himself for election by the nation, and he believed himself entitled so to present himself by the direct commendation of the Confessor. The actual election of Harold, which stood in his way, hurried as it was, he did not recognize as valid. But with this constitutional claim was inextricably mingled his resentment at the private wrong which Harold had done him, and a resolve to exact vengeance on the man whom he regarded as untrue to his oath. The wrong-doing of Harold furnished indeed no just ground for shedding the blood of Englishmen, but even in modern times we have not learnt practically to dissociate the private acts of rulers from the public responsibility of their subjects.

The eve of the struggle

The difficulties in the way of his enterprise were indeed enormous. He could reckon on no support within England itself. At home he had to extort the consent of his own reluctant baronage; to gather a motley host from every quarter of France, and to keep it together for months; to create a fleet, to cut down the very trees, to build, to launch, to man the vessels, and to find time amidst all this for the common business of government, for negotiations with Denmark and the Empire, with France, Brittany, and Anjou, with Flanders and with Rome. His rival's difficulties were hardly less than his own. Harold was threatened with invasion by his brother Tostig, who had taken refuge in Norway, as well as by William; and the fleet and army he had gathered lay watching for months along the coast. His one standing force was his body of hus-carls, but their numbers only enabled them to act as the nucleus of an army. On the other hand the Land-Fyrd, or general levy of fighting men, was a body easy to raise for any single encounter, but hard to keep together. To assemble such a force was to bring labour to a standstill. The men gathered under the King's standard were the farmers and ploughmen of their fields. The ships were the

1066

fishing-vessels of the coast. In September the task of holding them together became impossible, but their dispersion had hardly taken place when the two clouds which had so long been gathering burst at once upon the realm. A change of wind released the landlocked armament of William; but before changing, the wind which prisoned the Duke had flung the host of Harald Hardrada, the King of Norway, whose aid Tostig had enlisted, on the coast of his old earldom of Yorkshire. The King hastened with his household troops to the spot, and repulsed the invaders in a decisive overthrow at Stamford Bridge, in the neighbourhood of York, but ere he

could hurry back to London the Norman host had crossed the sea, and William, who had anchored on the 28th off the shingly coast of Pevensey, was ravaging the coast to bring his rival to an engagement. To march inland would have been to cut himself off from his fleet, the Duke's base of operations and only hope in case of defeat. His merciless ravages succeeded, as they were intended, in drawing Harold to an engagement; but the King judiciously refused to attack with the forces he had hastily summoned to his banner. If he was forced to give battle, he resolved to give it on ground he had himself chosen, and, advancing near enough to the coast to check William's ravages, he entrenched himself on the hill of Senlac, a low spur of the Sussex Downs, near Hastings, in a position which covered London, and forced the Norman army to concentrate. With a host subsisting by pillage, to concentrate is to starve, and no alternative was left to William but a decisive victory or ruin. 1042 to 1066

Along the higher ground that leads from Hastings the Duke led his men in the dim dawn of an October morning to the mound of Telham. It was from this point that the Normans saw the host of the English gathered thickly behind a rough trench and a stockade on the height of Senlac. Marshy ground covered their right; on the left, the most exposed part of the position, the hus-carls or body-guard of Harold, men in full armour and wielding huge axes, were grouped round the Golden Dragon of Wessex and the standard of the King. The rest of the ground was covered by the thick masses of half-armed rustics who had flocked at Harold's summons to the fight with the stranger. It was against the centre of this formidable position that William arrayed his Norman knighthood, while the mercenary forces he had gathered in France and Brittany were ordered to attack its flanks. A general charge of the Norman foot opened the battle; in front rode the minstrel Taillefer, tossing his sword in the air and catching it again while he chaunted the song of Roland. He was the first of the host who struck a blow, and he was the first to fall. The charge broke vainly on the stout stockade behind which the English warriors plied axe and javelin with fierce cries of "Out, out," and the repulse of the Norman footmen was followed by the repulse of the Norman horse. Again and again the Duke rallied and led them to the fatal stockade. All the fury of fight that glowed in his Norseman's blood, all the headlong valour that had spurred him over the slopes of Val-ès-dunes, mingled that day with the coolness of head, the dogged perseverance, the inexhaustible faculty of resource which had shone at Mortemer and Varaville. His Breton troops, entangled in the marshy ground on his left, broke in disorder, and a cry arose, as the panic spread through the army, that the Duke was slain. "I live," shouted William, as he tore off his helmet, "and by God's help will conquer yet." Maddened by repulse, the Duke spurred right at the standard; unhorsed, his terrible mace struck down Gyrth, the King's brother, and stretched Leofwine, a second of Godwine's sons, beside him; The Battle of Senlac *Oct.* 14

1042 to 1066

again dismounted, a blow from his hand hurled to the ground an unmannerly rider who would not lend him his steed. Amidst the roar and tumult of the battle he turned the flight he had arrested into the means of victory. Broken as the stockade was by his desperate onset, the shield-wall of the warriors behind it still held the Normans at bay, when William by a feint of flight drew a part of the English force from their post of vantage. Turning on his disorderly pursuers, the Duke cut them to pieces, broke through the abandoned line, and was master of the central plateau, while French and Bretons made good their ascent on either flank. At three the hill seemed won, at six the fight still raged around the standard, where Harold's hus-carls stood stubbornly at bay on the spot marked afterwards by the high altar of Battle Abbey. An order from the Duke at last brought his archers to the front, and their arrow-flight told heavily on the dense masses crowded around the King. As the sun went down, a shaft pierced Harold's right eye; he fell between the royal ensigns, and the battle closed with a desperate *mêlée* over his corpse. While night covered the flight of the English, the Conqueror pitched his tent on the very spot where his rival had fallen, and "sate down to eat and drink among the dead."

William becomes King

Securing Romney and Dover, the Duke marched slowly by Canterbury upon London. Faction and intrigue were in reality doing his work for him. Harold's brothers had fallen with the King on the field of Senlac, and there was none of the house of Godwine to contest the crown; while of the old royal line there remained but a single boy, Eadgar the Ætheling, son of the eldest of Eadmund Ironside's children, who had fled, as we have seen, before Cnut's persecution as far as Hungary for shelter. Boy as he was, he was chosen King, but the choice gave little strength to the national cause. The widow of the Confessor surrendered Winchester to the Duke. The bishops gathered at London inclined to submission. The citizens themselves faltered as William, passing by their walls, gave Southwark to the flames. The throne of the boy-king really rested for support on the Earls of Mercia and Northumbria, Eadwine and Morkere; and William, crossing the Thames at Wallingford and marching into Hertfordshire, threatened to cut them off from their earldoms. The masterly movement brought about an instant submission. Eadwine and Morkere retreated hastily home from London, and the city gave way at once. Eadgar himself was at the head of the deputation who came to offer the crown to the Norman Duke; "they bowed to him," says the English annalist, pathetically, "for need." They bowed to the Norman as they had bowed to the Dane, and William accepted the crown in the spirit of Cnut. London indeed was secured by the erection of a fortress which afterwards grew into the Tower, but William desired to reign not as a conqueror but as a lawful king. He received the crown at Westminster from the hands of Archbishop Ealdred, amidst shouts of "Yea, Yea,"

Christmas 1066

from his new English subjects. Fines from the greater landowners atoned for a resistance which was now counted as rebellion; but with this exception every measure of the new sovereign indicated his desire of ruling as a successor of Eadward or Ælfred. As yet, indeed, the greater part of England remained quietly aloof from him, and he can hardly be said to have been recognised as king by Northumberland or the greater part of Mercia. But to the east of a line which stretched from Norwich to Dorsetshire his rule was unquestioned, and over this portion he ruled as an English king. His soldiers were kept in strict order. No change was made in law or custom. The privileges of London were recognized by a royal writ which still remains, the most venerable of its muniments, among the city's archives. Peace and order were restored. William even attempted, though in vain, to learn the English tongue, that he might personally administer justice to the suitors in his court. The kingdom seemed so tranquil that only a few months had passed after the battle of Senlac when William, leaving England in charge of his brother, Odo Bishop of Bayeux, and his minister, William Fitz-Osbern, returned for a while to Normandy. 1068 to 1071

Section V.—The Norman Conquest, 1068—1071

[*Authorities.*—The original authorities as before, with the addition of Florence of Worcester and the English Chronicle. William of Malmesbury and Symeon of Durham are also useful. Domesday Book, edited Farley and Ellis, and the Domesday of St. Paul's, edited Hale, are indispensable. Among modern authorities may be mentioned Stubbs, for the constitutional history; Ramsay, "Foundations of England," especially valuable as a guide to the original authorities; Stubbs, Historical Introductions to the Rolls Series; and Davis, "England under the Normans and Angevins" and the "Political History of England." For the Jews, see Toovey, "Anglia Judaica," and Jacobs, the "Jews of Angevin England." For the history of law, see Pollock and Maitland, "History of English Law."]

It is not to his victory at Senlac, but to the struggle which followed his return from Normandy, that William owes his title of the "Conqueror." During his absence Bishop Odo's tyranny had forced the Kentishmen to seek aid from Count Eustace of Boulogne, while the Welsh princes supported a similar rising against Norman oppression in the west. But as yet the eastern counties trusted and held firmly by the King; Dover was saved, and the discontented fled over the sea to seek refuge in lands as distant as Constantinople, where we find Englishmen composing great part of the Imperial body-guard. A league of the western towns, headed by Exeter, threatened to prove a more serious danger, but William found an English force to suppress it, and it was at the head of an English army that he advanced upon Mercia and the North. His march through Central England reduced Eadwine and Morkere to submission, and a second rising ended in the occupation of York. The National revolt

1068 to 1071

England now lay helpless at his feet, but William's position as an English King remained unaffected. He became the Conqueror only in face of a national revolt. The signal for it came from without. Swegen, the King of Denmark, had for two years been preparing to dispute England with the Norman, and on the appearance of his fleet in the Humber the nation rose as one man. Eadgar the Ætheling, with a band of noble exiles who had taken refuge in Scotland, joined the Danes; in the west the men of Devon, Somerset, and Dorset gathered to the sieges of Exeter and Montacute, while the new Norman castle at Shrewsbury alone bridled the rising along the Welsh border. So ably had the revolt been planned that even William was taken by surprise. The news of the loss of York and of the slaughter of three thousand Normans who formed its garrison reached him as he was hunting in the Forest of Dean, and in a wild outburst of wrath the King swore by "the splendour of God" to avenge himself on Northumbria. But wrath went hand in hand with the coolest statesmanship. William saw clearly that the centre of resistance lay in the Danish fleet, and pushing rapidly to the Humber with a handful of horsemen, he purchased by a heavy bribe its inactivity and withdrawal. Then leaving York to the last, William turned rapidly westward with the troops which gathered round him, and swept the Welsh border as far as Shrewsbury. Exeter had been already relieved by William Fitz-Osbern, and the King was free to fulfil his oath of revenge on the North. After a long delay before the flooded waters of the Aire he entered York, and ravaged the whole country as far as the Tees with fire and sword. Town and village were harried and burnt, their inhabitants slain or driven over the Scotch border. The coast was especially wasted, that no hold might remain for any future invasion of the Danes. Harvest, cattle, the very implements of husbandry were so mercilessly destroyed, that the famine which followed is said to have swept off more than a hundred thousand victims, while half a century later the land still lay bare of culture and deserted of men for sixty miles northward of York. The work of vengeance was no sooner over than William led his army back from the Tees to York, and thence to Chester and the West. Never had he shown the grandeur of his character so memorably as in this terrible march. The winter was severe, the roads choked with snowdrifts or broken by torrents; provisions failed, and the army, drenched with rain and forced to consume its horses for food, broke out into open mutiny at the order to advance across the bleak country that separates Yorkshire from the West. The mercenaries from Anjou and Brittany demanded their release from service, and William granted their prayer with scorn. On foot, at the head of the troops which remained faithful, the King forced his way by paths inaccessible to horses, often aiding his men with his own hands to clear the road. The last hopes of the English ceased on his arrival at Chester; the King remained undisputed master of the conquered country, and busied himself in the erection

1068

of numerous castles which were henceforth to hold it in subjection. Two years passed quietly ere the last act of the conquest was reached. By the withdrawal of the Dane the hopes of England rested wholly on the aid it looked for from Scotland, where Eadgar the Ætheling had taken refuge, and where his sister Margaret had become the wife of King Malcolm. It was probably Malcolm's instigation which roused Eadwine and Morkere to a renewed revolt, which was at once foiled by the vigilance of the Conqueror. Eadwine fell in an obscure skirmish on the Scotch border, while Morkere found refuge for a time in the marshes of the eastern counties, where a desperate band of patriots had gathered round the outlaw, Hereward. Nowhere had William found a more obstinate resistance, but in spite of natural obstacles he drove a causeway two miles long across the fens, and the last hopes of England died in the surrender of Ely. Malcolm alone held out till the Conqueror summoned the whole host of the crown, and crossing the Lowlands and the Forth penetrated into the heart of Scotland. He had reached the Tay when the King's resistance gave way, and Malcolm appeared in the English camp and swore fealty at William's feet.

1068 to 1071 — *Last struggle of the English* 1071

The struggle which ended in the fens of Ely had wholly changed William's position. He no longer held the land merely as elected king, he added to his elective right the right of conquest. The system of government which he originated was, in fact, the result of the double character of his power. It represented neither the purely feudal system of the Continent nor the system of the older English royalty. More truly perhaps it may be said to have represented both. As the successor of Eadward, William retained the judicial and administrative organization of the older English realm. As the conqueror of England, he introduced the military organization of feudalism, so far as was necessary for the secure possession of his conquests. The ground was already prepared for such an organization; we have seen the beginnings of English feudalism in the warriors, the "companions" or "thegns," who were personally attached to the King's war-band, and received estates from the royal domain in reward for their personal service. Under the English kings this feudal distribution of estates had greatly increased, the bulk of the nobles having followed the Royal example and united their tenants to themselves by a similar process of subinfeudation. On the other hand, the pure freeholders, the class which formed the basis of the original English society, had been gradually reduced in number, partly through imitation of the class above them, but still more through the incessant wars and invasions which drove them to seek protectors among the thegns, even at the cost of independence. Feudalism, in fact, was superseding the older freedom in England even before the reign of William, as it had already superseded it in Germany or France. But the tendency was quickened and intensified by the Conquest; the desperate and universal resistance of his English subjects

William and Feudalism

1066 to 1071

forced William to hold by the sword what the sword had won, and an army strong enough to crush at any moment a national revolt was necessary for the preservation of his throne. Such an army could only be maintained by a vast confiscation of the soil. The failure of the English risings cleared the way for its establishment; the greater part of the higher nobility had fallen in battle or fled into exile, while the lower thegnhood had either forfeited the whole of their lands or redeemed a portion of them by the surrender of the rest. We see the completeness of the confiscation in the vast estates which William was enabled to grant to his more powerful followers. Two hundred manors in Kent, with an equal number elsewhere, rewarded the services of his brother Odo, and grants almost as large fell to the royal ministers, Fitz-Osbern and Montgomery, or to barons like the Mowbrays, the Warrennes, and the Clares. But the poorest soldier of fortune found his part in the spoil. The meanest Norman rose to wealth and power in the new dominion of his Duke. Great or small, however, each estate thus held from the crown was held by its tenant on condition of military service at the royal call; and when the larger holdings were divided by their owners, as was commonly the case, into smaller subtenancies, the under-tenants were bound by the same conditions of service to their lord. "Hear, my lord," swore the feudal dependant, as kneeling without arms and bareheaded he placed his hands within those of his superior. "I become liege man of yours for life and limb and earthly regard, and I will keep faith and loyalty to you for life and death, God help me." The kiss of his lord invested him with land or "fief" to descend to him and his heirs for ever. A whole army was by this means camped upon the soil, and the King's summons could at any moment gather sixty thousand knights to the royal standard.

The English baronage

Such a force, however, effective as it was against the conquered, was hardly less formidable to the crown itself. William found himself fronted in his new realm by the feudal baronage whom he had so hardly subdued to his will in Normandy, nobles impatient of law, and aiming at an hereditary military and judicial power within their own manors independent of the King. The genius of the Conqueror is shown in his quick discernment of this danger, and in the skill with which he met it. He availed himself of the old legal constitution of the country to hold justice firmly in his own hands. He retained the local courts of the hundred and the shire, where every freeman had a place, while he subjected all to the jurisdiction of the King's court, which towards the close of the earlier English monarchy had assumed the right of hearing appeals and of calling up cases from any quarter to its bar. The authority of the crown was maintained by the abolition of the great earldoms which had overshadowed it, those of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumberland, and by the royal nomination of sheriffs for the government of the shires. The estates of the great nobles, large as they were, were scattered over the country in a way which made union

between the landowners, or the hereditary attachment of great masses of vassals to a separate lord, equally impossible. By a usage peculiar to England, each sub-tenant, in addition to his oath of fealty to his lord, swore fealty directly to the crown. The feudal obligations, too, the rights and dues owing from each estate to the King, were enforced with remarkable strictness. Each tenant was bound to appear if needful thrice a year at the royal court, to pay a heavy fine or rent on succession to his estate, to contribute an "aid" in money in case of the King's capture in war, or the knighthood of the King's eldest son, or the marriage of his eldest daughter. An heir who was still a minor passed into the crown's wardship, and all profit from his estate went for the time to the King. If the estate devolved upon an heiress, her hand was at the King's disposal, and was generally sold to the highest bidder. Most manors, too, were burthened with their own "customs," or special dues to the crown, and it was for the purpose of ascertaining and recording these that William sent into each county the commissioners whose inquiries are preserved in Domesday Book. A jury empanelled in each hundred declared on oath the extent and nature of each estate, the names, numbers, condition of its inhabitants, its value before and after the Conquest, and the sums due from it to the crown. 1068 to 1071

William found another check on the aggressive spirit of the feudal baronage in his organization of the Church. One of his earliest acts was to summon Lanfranc from Normandy to aid him in its reform; and the deposition of Stigand, which raised Lanfranc to the see of Canterbury, was followed by the removal of most of the English prelates and abbots, and by the appointment of Norman ecclesiastics in their place. The synods of the new Archbishop did much to restore discipline, and William's own efforts were no doubt directed by a real desire for the religious improvement of his realm. "In choosing abbots and bishops," says a contemporary, "he considered not so much men's riches or power as their holiness and wisdom. He called together bishops and abbots and other wise counsellors in any vacancy, and by their advice inquired very carefully who was the best and wisest man, as well in divine things as in worldly, to rule the church of God." But honest as they were, the King's reforms tended directly to the increase of the royal power. The new bishops and abbots were cut off by their foreign origin from the flocks they ruled, while their popular influence was lessened by the removal of ecclesiastical cases from the hundred court, where till now the bishop had sat side by side with the civil magistrate, to the separate court of the bishop himself. Pregnant as this measure was with future trouble to the crown, it must for the time have furthered the isolation of the prelates, and fixed them into a position of dependence on the King, which was enhanced by the strictness with which William enforced his supremacy over the Church. Homage was exacted from bishop as from baron. No royal vassal could be excommunicated without The Church of the Normans

1063 to 1071

the King's licence. No synod could legislate without his previous assent and subsequent confirmation of its decrees. No papal letters could be received within the realm save by his permission. William was indeed the one ruler of his time who dared firmly to repudiate the claims which were now beginning to be put forward by the court of Rome. When Gregory VII. called on him to do fealty for his realm, the King sternly refused to admit the claim. "Fealty I have never willed to do, nor do I will to do it now. I have never promised it, nor do I find that my predecessors did it to yours."

But the greatest safeguard of the crown lay in the wealth and personal power of the king. Extensive as had been his grants to noble and soldier, William remained the greatest landowner in his realm. His rigid exaction of feudal dues added wealth to the great Hoard at Winchester, which had been begun by the spoil of the conquered. But William found a more ready source of revenue in the settlement of the Jewish traders, who followed him from Normandy, and who were enabled by the royal protection to establish themselves in separate quarters or "Jewries" of the chief towns of England. The Jew had no right or citizenship in the land; the Jewry in which he lived was, like the King's forest, exempt from the common law. He was simply the King's chattel, and his life and goods were absolutely at the King's mercy. But he was too valuable a possession to be lightly thrown away. A royal justiciary secured law to the Jewish merchant, who had no standing-ground in the local courts; his bonds were deposited for safety in a chamber of the royal palace at Westminster, which from their Hebrew name of "starrs" gained the title of the Star Chamber; he was protected against the popular hatred in the free exercise of his religion, and allowed to erect synagogues and to direct his own ecclesiastical affairs by means of a chief Rabbi. No measures could have been more beneficial to the kingdom at large. The Jew was the only capitalist in Europe, and heavy as was the usury he exacted, his loans gave an impulse to industry such as England had never felt before. The century which followed the Conquest witnessed an outburst of architectural energy which covered the land with castles and cathedrals; but castle and cathedral alike owed their existence to the loans of the Jew. His own example gave a new direction to domestic architecture. The buildings which, as at Lincoln and S. Edmondsbury, still retain their title of "Jews' Houses," were almost the first houses of stone which superseded the mere hovels of the English burghers. Nor was the influence of the Jews simply industrial. Through their connection with the Jewish schools in Spain and the East they opened a way for the revival of physical science. A Jewish medical school seems to have existed at Oxford; Adelard of Bath brought back a knowledge of mathematics from Cordova; Roger Bacon himself studied under the English Rabbis. But to the king the Jew was simply an engine of finance. The wealth which his industry accumulated was wrung from him whenever the King had need, and torture and

Settlement of the Jews

imprisonment were resorted to if milder entreaties failed. It was the wealth of the Jew that filled the royal exchequer at the outbreak of war or of revolt. It was in the Hebrew coffers that the Norman kings found strength to hold their baronage at bay. 1071 to 1127

Undue importance has been attached to the "Oath of Salisbury," by which William was supposed to have compelled all sub-tenants to swear fealty to him even against their immediate lord. In the idea there was nothing new; at the meeting, it is certain that all sub-tenants cannot have been present; and the meeting itself was only a temporary measure intended to meet a specific danger, the expected invasion of England by Cnut of Denmark. In the same way, the suggestion in the text that estates were deliberately distributed over the country so that no man might have a large holding in any one district is inaccurate; lands were distributed as they were confiscated, and the scattered nature of the holdings of each individual was the outcome rather of accident than of design.

Green's suggestion that the separation of the temporal and spiritual courts had the effect of increasing the division between bishops and abbots and their flocks is open to criticism. The great ecclesiastics continued to attend the local courts, though certain cases were transferred to the special Church courts.

Section VI.—The English Revival, 1071—1127

[*Authorities.*—In addition to the authorities already mentioned, Eadmer's "Historia Novorum" and his "Vita Anselmi" (Rolls Series) must be added. For the reign of Henry I., Henry of Huntingdon becomes important, and he is of special interest as being something more than a mere annalist. For the towns, see Cunningham, "Growth of British Industry and Commerce." The religious revival is illustrated in Dugdale's "Monasticon," and the history of the monastery of Bury St. Edmunds in the "Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey" (Rolls Series), which contain the Chronicle of Jocelyn de Brakelond, a vivid picture of monastic life.]

William and the Barons

The Conquest was hardly over when the struggle between the baronage and the crown began. The wisdom of William's policy in the destruction of the great earldoms which had overshadowed the throne, was shown in an attempt at their restoration made by Roger, the son of his minister William Fitz-Osbern, and the Breton, Ralf de Guader, whom the King had rewarded for his services at Senlac with the earldom of Norfolk. The rising was quickly suppressed, Roger thrown into prison and Ralf driven over sea; but the intrigues of the baronage soon found another leader in William's half-brother, the Bishop of Bayeux. Under pretence of aspiring by arms to the papacy, Bishop Odo collected money and men, but the treasure was at once seized by the royal officers, and the Bishop arrested in the midst of the Court. Even at the King's bidding no officer would venture to seize on a prelate of the Church; it was with his own hands that William was forced to effect his arrest. "I arrest not the Bishop, but the Earl of Kent," laughed the Conqueror, and Odo remained a prisoner till his death. 1075

1071 to 1127

It was in fact this vigorous personality of William which proved the chief safeguard of his throne. "Stark he was," says the English chronicler, "to men that withstood him. So harsh and cruel was he that none dared resist his will. Earls that did aught against his bidding he cast into bonds, bishops he stripped of their bishopricks, abbots of their abbacies. He spared not his own brother; first he was in the land, but the King cast him into bondage. If a man would live and hold his lands, need it were that he followed the King's will." But stern as his rule was, it gave peace to the land. Even amidst the sufferings which necessarily sprang from the circumstances of the Conquest itself, from the erection of castles, or the enclosure of forests, or the exactions which built up the great Hoard at Winchester, Englishmen were unable to forget "the good peace he made in the land, so that a man might fare over his realm with a bosom full of gold." Strange touches of a humanity far in advance of his age contrasted with the general temper of his government. One of the strongest traits in his character was his aversion to shed blood by process of law; he formally abolished the punishment of death, and only a single execution stains the annals of his reign. An edict yet more honourable to him put an end to the slave trade which had till then been carried on at the port of Bristol. If he was stark to baron or rebel he was "mild to them that loved God."

The English and their Kings

In power as in renown the Conqueror towered high above his predecessors on the throne. The fear of the Danes, which had so long hung like a thunder-cloud over England, passed away before the host which William gathered to meet a great armament

1085

assembled by King Canute. A mutiny dispersed the Danish fleet, and the murder of its King removed all peril from the North. Scotland, already humbled by William's invasion, was bridled by the erection of a strong fortress at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and after penetrating with his army to the heart of Wales, the King commenced its systematic reduction by settling barons along its frontier with licence to conquer the land to their own profit. His closing years were disturbed by a rebellion of his son Robert and a quarrel with France; as he rode down the steep street of Mantes, which he had given to the flames, his horse stumbled among the embers, and William, flung heavily against his saddle, was borne

Death of the Conqueror 1087

home to Rouen to die. The sound of the minster bell woke him at dawn as he lay in the convent of St. Gervais, overlooking the city —it was the hour of prime—and stretching out his hands in prayer the Conqueror passed quietly away. With him passed the terror which had held the baronage in awe, while the severance of his dominions roused their hopes of successful resistance to the stern rule beneath which they had bowed. William had bequeathed Normandy to his eldest son Robert; William, his second son, had hastened with his father's ring to England, where the influence of Lanfranc at once secured him the crown. The baronage seized the opportunity to rise in arms under pretext of supporting the claims

of Robert, whose weakness of character gave full scope for the growth of feudal independence, and Bishop Odo placed himself at the head of the revolt. The new King was thrown almost wholly on the loyalty of his English subjects, but their hatred of Norman lawlessness rallied them to his standard; Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester, the one surviving Bishop of English blood, defeated the insurgents in the West, and the King, summoning the freemen of country and town to his host under pain of being branded as "nithing" or worthless, advanced with a large force against Rochester, where the barons were concentrated. A plague which broke out among the garrison forced them to capitulate; and as the prisoners passed through the royal army, cries of "gallows and cord" burst from the English ranks. At a later period of his reign a vast conspiracy was organised to place Stephen of Albemarle, a near cousin of the royal house, upon the throne, but the capture of Robert Mowbray, the Earl of Northumberland, who had placed himself at its head, and the imprisonment and exile of his fellow-conspirators, again crushed the hopes of the baronage. 1071 to 1127

The Red King and the Church

While the spirit of national patriotism rose to life again in this struggle of the crown against the baronage, the boldness of a single ecclesiastic revived a national opposition to the mere administrative despotism which had prevailed since the fatal day of Senlac. If William the Red inherited much of his father's energy as well as his policy towards the conquered English, he inherited none of his moral grandeur. His profligacy and extravagance soon exhausted the royal Hoard, and the death of Lanfranc left him free to fill it at the expense of the Church. During the vacancy of a see or abbey its revenues went to the royal treasury, and so steadily did William refuse to appoint successors to the prelates whom death removed, that at the close of his reign one archbishopric, four bishoprics, and eleven abbeys were found to be without pastors. The see of Canterbury itself remained vacant till a dangerous illness frightened the King into the promotion of Anselm, who happened at the time to be in England on the business of his house. The Abbot of Bec was dragged to the royal couch and the cross forced into his hands, but William had no sooner recovered from his sickness than he found himself face to face with an opponent whose meek and loving temper rose into firmness and grandeur when it fronted the tyranny of the King. The Conquest, as we have seen, had robbed the Church of all moral power as the representative of the higher national interests against a brutal despotism by placing it in a position of mere dependence on the crown; and, though the struggle between William and the Archbishop turned for the most part on points which have no direct bearing on our history, the boldness of Anselm's attitude not only broke the tradition of ecclesiastical servitude, but infused through the nation at large a new spirit of independence. The real character of the contest appears in the Primate's answer, when his remonstrances against the lawless exactions from the Church were met by a demand for

Anselm Archbishop

1071 to 1127

a present on his own promotion, and his first offer of five hundred pounds was contemptuously refused. "Treat me as a free man," Anselm replied, "and I devote myself and all that I have to your service, but if you treat me as a slave you shall have neither me nor mine." A burst of the Red King's fury drove the Archbishop from court, and he finally decided to quit the country, but his example had not been lost, and the close of William's reign found a new spirit of freedom in England with which the greatest of the Conqueror's sons was glad to make terms.

England and Henry the First

As a soldier the Red King was little inferior to his father. Normandy had been pledged to him by his brother Robert in exchange for a sum which enabled the Duke to march in the first Crusade for the delivery of the Holy Land, and a rebellion at Le Mans was subdued by the fierce energy with which William flung himself, at the news of it, into the first boat he found, and crossed the Channel in face of a storm. "Kings never drown," he replied, contemptuously, to the remonstrances of his followers. Homage was again wrested from Malcolm by a march to the Firth of Forth, and the subsequent death of that King threw Scotland into a disorder which enabled an army under Eadgar Ætheling to establish Edgar, the son of Margaret, as an English feudatory on the throne. In Wales William was less triumphant, and the terrible losses inflicted on the heavy Norman cavalry in the fastnesses of Snowdon forced him to fall back on the slower but wiser policy of the Conqueror. Triumph and defeat alike ended in a strange and tragical close;

Death of the Red King 1100

the Red King was found dead by peasants in a glade of the New Forest, with the arrow either of a hunter or an assassin in his breast. Robert was still on his return from the Holy Land, where his bravery had redeemed much of his earlier ill-fame, and the English crown was at once seized by his younger brother Henry, in spite of the opposition of the baronage, who clung to the Duke of Normandy and the union of their estates on both sides the Channel under a single ruler. Their attitude threw Henry, as it had thrown Rufus, on the support of the English, and the two great measures which followed his coronation mark the new relation which was thus brought about between the people and

Henry's Charter

their King. Henry's Charter is important, not merely as the direct precedent for the Great Charter of John, but as the first limitation which had been imposed on the despotism established by the Conquest. The "evil customs" by which the Red King had enslaved and plundered the Church were explicitly renounced in it, the unlimited demands made by both the Conqueror and his son on the baronage exchanged for customary fees, while the rights of the people itself, though recognized more vaguely, were not forgotten. The barons were held to do justice to their under-tenants and to renounce tyrannical exactions from them, the King promising to restore order and the "law of Eadward," the old constitution of the realm, with the changes which his father had introduced. His marriage gave a significance to these promises

which the meanest English peasant could understand. Edith, or Matilda, was the daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland and of Margaret, the sister of Eadgar Ætheling. She had been brought up in the nunnery of Romsey by its abbess, her aunt Christina, and the veil which she had taken there formed an obstacle to her union with the King, which was only removed by the wisdom of Anselm. The Archbishop's recall had been one of Henry's first acts after his accession, and Matilda appeared before his court to tell her tale in words of passionate earnestness. She had been veiled in her childhood, she asserted, only to save her from the insults of the rude soldiery who infested the land, had flung the veil from her again and again, and had yielded at last to the unwomanly taunts, the actual blows of her aunt. "As often as I stood in her presence," the girl pleaded passionately to the saintly Primate, "I wore the veil, trembling as I wore it with indignation and grief. But as soon as I could get out of her sight I used to snatch it from my head, fling it on the ground, and trample it under foot. That was the way, and none other, in which I was veiled." Anselm at once declared her free from conventual bonds, and the shout of the English multitude when he set the crown on Matilda's brow drowned the murmur of Churchman or of baron. The taunts of the Norman nobles who nicknamed the King and his spouse "Farmer Godric and his cummer Godgifu," were lost in the joy of the people at large. For the first time since the Conquest, an English sovereign sat on the English throne. The blood of Cerdic and Ælfred was to blend itself with that of Hrolf and the Conqueror. It was impossible that the two peoples should henceforth be severed from one another, and their fusion proceeded so rapidly that the name of Norman had passed away at the accession of Henry the Second, and the descendants of the victors at Senlac boasted themselves to be Englishmen.

1071 to 1127

Henry's marriage

We can dimly trace the progress of this blending of the two races together in the case of the burgher population in the towns.

The English towns

One immediate result of the Conquest had been a great immigration into England from the Continent. A peaceful invasion of the industrial and trading classes of Normandy followed quick on the conquest of the Norman soldiery. Every Norman noble as he quartered himself upon English lands, every Norman abbot as he entered his English cloister, gathered French artists or French domestics around his new castle or his new church. Around the Abbey of Battle, for instance, which William had founded on the site of his great victory, "Gilbert the Foreigner, Gilbert the Weaver, Benet the Steward, Hugh the Secretary, Baldwin the Tailor," mixed with the English tenantry. More especially was this the case with the capital. Long before the landing of William the Normans had had mercantile establishments in London. Their settlement would naturally have remained a mere trading colony, but London had no sooner submitted to the Conqueror than "many of the citizens of Rouen and Caen passed over thither, preferring to be dwellers

1071 to 1127

in this city, inasmuch as it was fitter for their trading, and better stored with the merchandise in which they were wont to traffic." At Norwich and elsewhere the French colony isolated itself in a separate French town, side by side with the English borough. In London it seems to have taken at once the position of a governing class. The name of Gilbert Beket, the father of the famous Archbishop, is one of the few that remain to us of the Portreeves of London, the predecessors of its Mayors; he held in Stephen's time a large property in houses within the walls, and a proof of his civic importance was preserved in the annual visit of each newly-elected chief magistrate to his tomb in the little chapel which he had founded in the churchyard of S. Paul's. Yet Gilbert was one of the Norman strangers who followed in the wake of the Conqueror; he was by birth a burgher of Rouen, as his wife was of a burgher family from Caen. It was partly to this infusion of foreign blood, partly no doubt to the long internal peace and order secured by the Norman rule, that the English towns owed the wealth and importance to which they attained during the reign of Henry the First. In the silent growth and elevation of the English people the boroughs led the way: unnoticed and despised by prelate and noble, they had alone preserved the full tradition of Teutonic liberty. The rights of self-government, of free speech in free meeting, of equal justice by one's equals, were brought safely across the ages of Norman tyranny by the traders and shopkeepers of the towns. In the quiet, quaintly named streets, in town-mead, and market-place, in the lord's mill beside the stream, in the bell that swung out its summons to the crowded borough-mote, in the jealousies of craftsmen and guilds, lay the real life of Englishmen, the life of their home and trade, their ceaseless, sober struggle with oppression, their steady, unwearied battle for self-government. It is difficult to trace the steps by which borough after borough won its freedom. The bulk of them were situated in the royal demesne, and, like other tenants, their customary rents were collected and justice administered by a royal officer. Amongst our towns London stood chief, and the charter which Henry granted it became the model for the rest. The King yielded the citizens the right of justice; every townsman could claim to be tried by his fellow-townsmen in the town-courts or hustings, whose sessions took place every week. They were subject only to the old English trial by oath, and exempt from the trial by battle, which the Normans had introduced. Their trade was protected from toll or exaction over the length and breadth of the land. The King however still nominated, in London as elsewhere, the Portreeve, or magistrate of the town, nor were the citizens as yet united together in a commune or corporation; but an imperfect civic organisation existed in the "wards" or quarters of the town, each governed by its own alderman, and in the "guilds" or voluntary associations of merchants or traders which ensured order and mutual protection for their members. Loose, too, as these bonds may seem,

they were drawn firmly together by the older English traditions of freedom which the towns preserved. In London, for instance, the burgesses gathered in town-mote when the bell swung out from S. Paul's to deliberate freely on their own affairs under the presidency of their aldermen. Here, too, they mustered in arms, if danger threatened the city, and delivered the city-banner to their captain, the Norman baron Fitz-Walter, to lead them against the enemy. Few boroughs had as yet attained to power such as this, but charter after charter during Henry's reign raised the townsmen of boroughs from mere traders, wholly at the mercy of their lord, into customary tenants, who had purchased their freedom by a fixed rent, regulated their own trade, and enjoyed exemption from all but their own justice. 1071 to 1127

S. Edmundsbury

The advance of towns which had grown up not on the royal domain but around abbey or castle was slower and more difficult. The story of S. Edmundsbury shows how gradual was the transition from pure serfage to an imperfect freedom. Much that had been plough-land in the time of the Confessor was covered with houses under the Norman rule. The building of the great abbey-church drew its craftsmen and masons to mingle with the ploughmen and reapers of the Abbot's domain. The troubles of the time helped here as elsewhere the progress of the town; serfs, fugitives from justice or their lord, the trader, the Jew, naturally sought shelter under the strong hand of S. Edmund. But the settlers were wholly at the Abbot's mercy. Not a settler but was bound to pay his pence to the Abbot's treasury, to plough a rood of his land, to reap in his harvest-field, to fold his sheep in the Abbey folds, to help bring the annual catch of eels from the Abbey waters. Within the four crosses that bounded the Abbot's domain, land and water were his; the cattle of the townsmen paid for their pasture on the common; if the fullers refused the loan of their cloth, the cellarer would refuse the use of the stream, and seize their looms wherever he found them. No toll might be levied from tenants of the Abbey farms, and customers had to wait before shop and stall till the buyers of the Abbot had had the pick of the market. There was little chance of redress, for if burghers complained in folk-mote, it was before the Abbot's officers that its meeting was held; if they appealed to the alderman, he was the Abbot's nominee, and received the horn, the symbol of his office, at the Abbot's hands. Like all the greater revolutions of society, the advance from this mere serfage was a silent one; indeed its more galling instances of oppression seem to have slipped unconsciously away. Some, like the eel-fishing, were commuted for an easy rent; others, like the slavery of the fullers and the toll of flax, simply disappeared. By usage, by omission, by downright forgetfulness, here by a little struggle, there by a present to a needy abbot, the town won freedom. But progress was not always unconscious, and one incident in the history of S. Edmundsbury is remarkable, not merely as indicating the advance of law, but yet

1071 to 1127

more as marking the part which a new moral sense of man's right to equal justice was to play in the general advance of the realm. Rude as the borough was, it had preserved its right of meeting in full assembly of the townsmen for government and law. Justice was administered in presence of the burgesses, and the accused acquitted or condemned by the oath of his neighbours. Without the borough bounds, however, the system of the Norman judicature prevailed, and the rural tenants who did suit and service at the Cellarer's court were subject to the decision of the trial by battle. The execution of a farmer named Kebel, who was subject to this feudal jurisdiction, brought the two systems into vivid contrast. He seems to have been guiltless of the crime laid to his charge, but the duel went against him, and he was hung just without the gates. The taunts of the townsmen woke his fellow-farmers to a sense of wrong. "Had Kebel been a dweller within the borough," said the burgesses, "he would have got his acquittal from the oaths of his neighbours, as our liberty is"; and even the monks were moved to a decision that their tenants should enjoy equal liberty and justice with the townsmen. The franchise of the town was extended to the rural possessions of the Abbey without it, the farmers "came to the toll-house, were written in the alderman's roll, and paid the town-penny."

The religious revival

The moral revolution which events like this indicate was backed by a religious revival which forms a marked feature in the reign of Henry the First. Pious, learned, and energetic as the bishops of William's appointment had been, they were not Englishmen. Till Beket's time no Englishmen occupied the throne of Canterbury; till Jocelyn, in the reign of John, no Englishmen occupied the see of Wells. In language, in manner, in sympathy, the higher clergy were thus completely severed from the lower priesthood and the people, and the whole influence of the Church, constitutional as well as religious, was for the moment paralyzed. Lanfranc indeed exercised a great personal influence over William, but Anselm stood alone against Rufus, and no voice of ecclesiastical freedom broke elsewhere the silence of the reign of Henry the First. But at the close of the latter reign and throughout that of Stephen, the people, left thus without shepherds, was stirred by the first of those great religious movements which England was to experience afterwards in the preaching of the Friars, the Lollardism of Wyclif, the Reformation, the Puritan enthusiasm, and the mission work of the Wesleys. Everywhere in town and country men banded themselves together for prayer, hermits flocked to the woods, noble and churl welcomed the austere Cistercians, a reformed outshoot of the Benedictine order, as they spread over the moors and forests of the North. A new spirit of devotion woke the slumber of the religious houses, and penetrated alike to the home of the noble Walter d'Espec at Rievaulx, or of the trader Gilbert Beket in Cheapside. London took its full share in the great revival. The city was proud of its religion, its thirteen conventual and more

than a hundred parochial churches. The new impulse changed, in fact, its very aspect. In the midst of the city Bishop Richard busied himself with the vast cathedral which Bishop Maurice had begun; barges came up the river with stone from Caen for the great arches that moved the popular wonder, while street and lane were being levelled to make space for the famous Churchyard of S. Paul's. Rahere, the King's minstrel, raised the priory of S. Bartholomew beside Smithfield. Alfune built S. Giles's at Cripplegate. The old English Cnihtena-gild surrendered their soke of Aldgate as a site for the new priory of the Holy Trinity. The tale of this house paints admirably the temper of the citizens at this time. Its founder, Prior Norman, had built church and cloister and bought books and vestments in so liberal a fashion that at last no money remained to buy bread. The canons were at their last gasp when many of the city folk, looking into the refectory as they paced round the cloister in their usual Sunday procession, saw the tables laid but not a single loaf on them. "Here is a fine set-out," cried the citizens, "but where is the bread to come from?" The women present vowed to bring a loaf every Sunday, and there was soon bread enough and to spare for the priory and its guests. We see the strength of the new movement in the new class of ecclesiastics that it forces on the stage; men like Anselm or John of Salisbury, or the two great prelates who followed one another after Henry's death in the see of Canterbury, Theobald and Thomas, derived whatever might they possessed from sheer holiness of life or unselfishness of aim. The revival left its stamp on the fabric of the constitution itself: the paralysis of the Church ceased as the new impulse bound the prelacy and people together, and its action, when at the end of Henry's reign it started into a power strong enough to save England from anarchy, has been felt in our history ever since. 1071 to 1127

From this revival of English feeling Henry himself stood jealously aloof; but the enthusiasm which his marriage had excited enabled him to defy the claims of his brother and the disaffection of his nobles. Robert landed like his father at Pevensey, to find himself face to face with an English army which Anselm's summons had gathered round the King; and his retreat left Henry free to deal sternly with the rebel barons. Robert of Belesme, the son of Roger of Montgomery, was now their chief; but 60,000 English footmen followed the King through the rough passes which led to Shrewsbury, and an early surrender alone saved Robert's life. Master of his own realm and enriched by the confiscated lands of the revolted baronage, Henry crossed into Normandy, where the misgovernment of Robert had alienated the clergy and trades, and where the outrages of the Norman nobles forced the more peaceful classes to call the King to their aid. On the field of Tenchebray his forces met those of the Duke, and a decisive English victory on Norman soil avenged the shame of Hastings. The conquered duchy became a dependence of the English crown, and Henry's Administration 1106

1071 to 1127

Henry's energies were frittered away through a quarter of a century in crushing its revolts, the hostility of the French, and the efforts of his nephew, William, the son of Robert, to regain the crown which his father had lost at Tenchebray. In England, however, all was peace. The vigorous administration of Henry the First completed in fullest detail the system of government which the Conqueror had sketched. The vast estates which had fallen to the crown through forfeiture and revolt were granted out to new men dependent on royal favour; while the towns were raised into a counterbalancing force to the feudalism of the country by the grant of charters and the foundation of trade-guilds. A new organization of justice and finance bound the kingdom together under the royal administration. The Clerks of the Royal Chapel were formed into a body of secretaries or royal ministers, whose head bore the title of Chancellor. Above them stood the Justiciar, or Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, who in the frequent absence of the King acted as Regent of the realm, and whose staff, selected from the barons connected with the royal household, were formed into a Supreme Court of Appeal. The King's Court, as this was called, permanently represented the whole court of royal vassals, which had hitherto been summoned thrice in the year. As the royal council, it revised and registered laws, and its "counsel and consent," though merely formal, preserved the principle of the older popular legislation. As a court of justice it formed the highest court of appeal: it could call up any suit from a lower tribunal on the application of a suitor, while the union of several sheriffdoms under one of its members connected it closely with the local courts. As a financial body, its chief work lay in the assessment and collection of the revenue. In this capacity it took the name of the Court of Exchequer, from the chequered table, much like a chessboard, at which it sat, and on which accounts were rendered. In their financial capacity its justices became "barons of the Exchequer." Twice every year the sheriff of each county appeared before these barons and rendered the sum of the fixed rent from royal domains, the Danegeld or tax, the fines of the local courts, the feudal aids from the baronial estates, which formed the chief part of the royal revenue. Local disputes respecting these payments or the assessment of the town-rent were settled by a detachment of barons from the court who made the circuit of the shires, and whose fiscal visitations led to the judicial visitations, the "judges' circuits," which still form so marked a feature in our legal system.

The White Ship

From this work of internal reform Henry's attention was called suddenly by one terrible loss to the question of the succession to the throne. His son William "the Ætheling," as the English fondly styled the child of their own Matilda, had with a crowd of nobles accompanied the King on his return from Normandy; but the White Ship in which he had embarked lingered behind the rest of the royal fleet, while the young nobles, excited with wine, hung

over the ship's side and chased away with taunts the priest who came to give the customary benediction. At last the guards of the King's treasure pressed the vessel's departure, and, driven by the arms of fifty rowers, it swept swiftly out to sea. All at once the ship's side struck on a rock at the mouth of the harbour, and in an instant it sank beneath the waves. One terrible cry, ringing through the stillness of the night, was heard by the royal fleet, but it was not till the morning that the fatal news reached the King. He fell unconscious to the ground, and rose never to smile again. Henry had no other son, and the whole circle of his foreign foes closed round him the more fiercely that the son of Robert was now his natural heir. The King hated William, while he loved Maud, the daughter who still remained to him, who had been married to the Emperor Henry the Fifth, and whose husband's death now restored her to her father. He recognized her as his heir, though the succession of a woman seemed strange to the feudal baronage; nobles and priests were forced to swear allegiance to her as their future mistress, and Henry affianced her to the son of the one foe he really feared, the Count of Anjou.

1071 to 1127

Wreck of the White Ship 1120

Section VII.—England and Anjou, 870—1154

[The authorities for the history of Anjou are collected in the "Chroniques d'Anjou" (Société de l'Histoire de France). The chief sources for the reign of Stephen, in addition to those already mentioned, are contained in the Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II., and Richard I. (Rolls Series). Round's "Geoffrey de Mandeville" is invaluable for the reign of Stephen.]

The Counts of Anjou

To understand the history of England under its Angevin rulers, we must first know something of the Angevins themselves. The character and the policy of Henry the Second and his sons were as much a heritage of their race as the broad lands of Anjou. The fortunes of England were being slowly wrought out in every incident of the history of the Counts, as the descendants of a Breton woodman became masters not of Anjou only, but of Touraine, Maine, and Poitou, of Gascony and Auvergne, of Acquitaine and Normandy, and sovereigns at last of the great realm which Normandy had won. The legend of the father of their race carries us back to the times of our own Ælfred, when the Danes were ravaging along Loire as they ravaged along Thames. In the heart of the Breton border, in the debateable land between France and Brittany, dwelt Tortulf the Forester, half-brigand, half-hunter as the gloomy days went, living in free outlaw-fashion in the woods about Rennes. Tortulf had learned in his rough forest school "how to strike the foe, to sleep on the bare ground, to bear hunger and toil, summer's heat and winter's frost, how to fear nothing save ill-fame." Following King Charles the Bald in his struggle with the Danes, the woodman won broad lands along Loire, and his son Ingelger, who

870

870 to 1154 had swept the Northmen from Touraine and the land to the west, which they had burnt and wasted into a vast solitude, became the first Count of Anjou. The second, Fulc the Red, attached himself 888 to the Dukes of France, who were now drawing nearer to the throne, and received from them in guerdon the western portion of Anjou which lay across the Mayenne. The story of his son is a story of peace, breaking like a quiet idyll the war-storms of his house. Alone of his race Fulc the Good waged no wars: his delight was to sit in the choir of Tours and to be called "Canon." One 938 Martinmas eve Fulc was singing there in clerkly guise, when the King, Lewis d'Outremer, entered the church. "He sings like a priest," laughed the King, as his nobles pointed mockingly to the figure of the Count-Canon; but Fulc was ready with his reply. "Know, my lord," wrote the Count of Anjou, "that a King unlearned is a crowned ass." Fulc was in fact no priest, but a busy ruler, governing, enforcing peace, and carrying justice to every corner of the wasted land. To him alone of his race men gave the title of "the Good."

Fulc the Black 987 to 1040 Hampered by revolt, himself in character little more than a bold, dashing soldier, Fulc's son, Geoffry Grey-gown, sank almost into a vassal of his powerful neighbours, the Counts of Blois and Champagne. The vassalage was roughly shaken off by his successor. Fulc Nerra, Fulc the Black, is the greatest of the Angevins, the first in whom we can trace that marked type of character which their house was to preserve with a fatal constancy through two hundred years. He was without natural affection. In his youth he burnt a wife at the stake, and legend told how he led her to her doom decked out in his gayest attire. In his old age he waged his bitterest war against his son, and exacted from him when vanquished a humiliation which men reserved for the deadliest of their foes. "You are conquered, you are conquered!" shouted the old man in fierce exultation, as Geoffry, bridled and saddled like a beast of burden, crawled for pardon to his father's feet. In Fulc first appeared the low type of superstition which startled even superstitious ages in the early Plantagenets, a superstition based simply on terror and stript of all poetry or belief. Robber as he was of Church lands, and contemptuous of ecclesiastical censures, the fear of the end of the world drove Fulc to the Holy Sepulchre. Barefoot and with the strokes of the scourge falling heavily on his shoulders, the Count had himself dragged by a halter through the streets of Jerusalem, and courted the doom of martyrdom by his wild outcries of penitence. He rewarded the fidelity of Herbert of Le Mans, whose aid saved him from utter ruin, by entrapping him into captivity and robbing him of his lands. He secured the terrified friendship of the French king by despatching twelve assassins to cut down before his eyes the minister who had troubled it. Familiar as the age was with treason and rapine and blood, it recoiled from the cool cynicism of his crimes, and believed the wrath of Heaven to have been revealed

against the union of the worst forms of evil in Fulc the Black. But neither the wrath of Heaven nor the curses of men broke with a single mishap the fifty years of his success. 870 to 1154

At his accession Anjou was the least important of the greater provinces of France. At his death it stood, if not in extent, at least in real power, first among them all. Cool-headed, clear-sighted, quick to resolve, quicker to strike, Fulc's career was one long series of victories over all his rivals. He was a consummate general, and he had the gift of personal bravery, which was denied to some of his greatest descendants. There was a moment in the first of his battles when the day seemed lost for Anjou; a feigned retreat of the Bretons had drawn the Angevin horsemen into a line of hidden pitfalls, and the Count himself was flung heavily to the ground. Dragged from the medley of men and horses, he swept down almost singly on the foe "as a storm-wind" (so rang the pæan of the Angevins) "sweeps down on the thick corn-rows," and the field was won. To these qualities of the warrior he added a power of political organization, a capacity for far-reaching combinations, a faculty of statesmanship, which became the heritage of the Angevins, and lifted them as high above the intellectual level of the rulers of their time as their shameless wickedness degraded them below the level of man. His overthrow of Brittany on the field of Conquereux was followed by the gradual absorption of Southern Touraine, while his restless activity covered the land with castles and abbeys. The very spirit of the Black Count seems still to frown from the dark tower of Duretal on the sunny valley of the Loir. His great victory at Pontlevoi crushed the rival house of Blois; the seizure of Saumur completed his conquests in the south, while Northern Touraine was won bit by bit till only Tours resisted the Angevin. The treacherous seizure of its Count, Herbert Wake-dog, left Maine at his mercy ere the old man bequeathed his unfinished work to his son. As a warrior Geoffry Martel was hardly inferior to his father. A decisive overthrow wrested Tours from the Count of Blois; a second left Poitou at his mercy; and the seizure of Le Mans brought him to the Norman border. Here, as we have seen, his advance was checked by the genius of William the Conqueror, and with his death the greatness of Anjou seemed for the time to have come to an end.

The greatness of Anjou

995

1016

1044 to 1060

Stripped of Maine by the Normans, and weakened by internal dissensions, the weak administration of the next count, Fulc Rechin, left Anjou powerless against its rivals along the Seine. It woke to fresh energy with the accession of his son, Fulc of Jerusalem. Now urging the turbulent Norman *noblesse* to revolt against the justice of their King, now supporting Robert's son William against his uncle, offering himself throughout as the one support of France, hemmed in as it was on all sides by the forces of Normandy and its allies the Counts of Blois and Champagne, Fulc was the one enemy whom Henry the First really feared. It was to disarm his restless hostility that the King yielded to his son, Geoffry the

The Angevin marriage

1109 to 1129

1070 to 1154

Handsome, the hand of his daughter Matilda. No marriage could have been more unpopular, and the secrecy with which it was effected was held by the barons as freeing them from the oath which they had sworn; for no baron could give a husband to his daughter, if he was without sons, save by his lord's consent, and by a strained analogy the barons contended that their own assent was necessary for the marriage of Maud. A more pressing danger lay in the greed of her husband Geoffry, who from his habit of wearing the common broom of Anjou (the *planta genista*) in his helmet had acquired, in addition to his surname of "the Handsome," the more famous title of "Plantagenet." His claims ended at last in intrigues with the Norman nobles, and Henry hurried to the border to meet an expected invasion, but the plot broke down at his presence, the Angevins withdrew, and the old man withdrew to the forest of Lyons to die.

Death of Henry 1135

Stephen of Blois

"God give him," wrote the Archbishop of Rouen from Henry's deathbed, "the peace he loved." With him indeed closed the long peace of the Norman rule. An outburst of anarchy followed on the news of his departure, and in the midst of the turmoil Earl Stephen, his nephew, appeared at the gates of London. Stephen was the son of the Conqueror's daughter, Adela, who had married a Count of Blois; he had been brought up at the English court, and his claim as nearest male heir, save his brother, of the Conqueror's blood (for his cousin, the son of Robert, had fallen in Flanders) was supported by his personal popularity. Mere swordsman as he was, his good-humour, his generosity, his very prodigality made him a favourite with all. No noble, however, had as yet ventured to join him, nor had any town opened its gates when London poured out to meet him with uproarious welcome. Neither baron nor prelate were present to constitute a National Council, but the great city did not hesitate to take their place. The voice of her citizens had long been accepted as representative of the popular assent in the election of a king; but it marks the progress of English independence under Henry that London now claimed of itself the right of election. Undismayed by the absence of the hereditary counsellors of the crown, its "aldermen and wise folk gathered together the folk-mote, and these providing at their own will for the good of the realm, unanimously resolved to choose a king." The solemn deliberation ended in the choice of Stephen: the citizens swore to defend the King with money and blood, Stephen swore to apply his whole strength to the pacification and good government of the realm.

Stephen and the baronages

If London was true to her oath, Stephen was false to his. The twenty years of his reign are years of a misrule and disorder unknown in our history. Stephen had been acknowledged even by the partisans of Matilda, but his weakness and prodigality soon gave room to feudal revolt. Released from the stern hand of Henry, the barons fortified their castles, and their example was necessarily followed, in self-defence, by the great prelates and nobles who had

acted as ministers to the late King. Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, was at the head of this party, and Stephen, suddenly quitting his inaction, seized him at Oxford and flung him into prison till he had consented to surrender his fortresses. The King's violence, while it cost him the support of the clergy, opened the way for Matilda's landing in England; and the country was soon divided between the adherents of the two rivals, the West supporting Matilda, London and the East Stephen. A defeat at Lincoln left the latter a captive in the hands of his enemies; Matilda entered London, and was received throughout the land as its "Lady," but the disdain with which she repulsed the claim of the city to the enjoyment of its older privileges roused its burghers to arms. Flying to Oxford, she was besieged there by Stephen, who had obtained his release; but she escaped in white robes by a postern, and crossing the river unobserved on the ice, made her way to Abingdon, to return early in 1147 to Normandy. The war had, in fact, become a mere chaos of pillage and bloodshed. The outrages of the feudal baronage showed from what horrors the Norman rule had so long saved England. No more ghastly picture of a nation's misery has ever been painted than that which closes the English Chronicle, whose last accents falter out amidst the horrors of the time. "They hanged up men by their feet and smoked them with foul smoke. Some were hanged up by their thumbs, others by the head, and burning things were hung on to their feet. They put knotted strings about their head and writhed them till they went into the brain. They put men into prisons where adders and snakes and toads were crawling, and so they tormented them. Some they put into a chest short and narrow and not deep, and that had sharp stones within, and forced men therein so that they broke all their limbs. In many of the castles were hateful and grim things called rachenteges, which two or three men had enough to do to carry. It was thus made: it was fastened to a beam, and had a sharp iron to go about a man's neck and throat, so that he might noways sit, or lie, or sleep, but he bore all the iron. Many thousands they afflicted with hunger." One gleam of national glory broke the darkness of the time. King David of Scotland stood first among the partisans of his kinswoman Matilda, and on the accession of Stephen his army crossed the border to enforce her claim. The pillage and cruelties of the wild tribes of Galloway and the Highlands roused the spirit of the North: baron and freeman gathered at York round Archbishop Thurstan, and marched to the field of Northallerton to await the foe. The sacred banners of S. Cuthbert of Durham, S. Peter of York, S. John of Beverley, and S. Wilfred of Ripon hung from a pole fixed in a four-wheeled car which stood in the centre of the host. "I who wear no armour," shouted the chief of the Galwegians, "will go as far this day as any one with breastplate of mail"; his men charged with wild shouts of "Albin, Albin," and were followed by the Norman knighthood of the Lowlands. The rout, however, was complete;

870 to 1154

1141

1142

Battle of the Standard 1138

1370 to 1154 the fierce hordes dashed in vain against the close English ranks around the standard, and the whole army fled in confusion to Carlisle.

England and the Church

England was rescued from this chaos of misrule by the efforts of the Church. In the early part of Stephen's reign his brother Henry, the Bishop of Winchester, acting as Papal Legate for the realm, had striven to supply the absence of any royal or national authority by convening synods of bishops, and by asserting the moral right of the Church to declare sovereigns unworthy of the throne. The compact between king and people had become a part of constitutional law in the Charter of Henry, but its legitimate consequence in the responsibility of the crown for the execution of the compact was first drawn out by these ecclesiastical councils. From their alternate depositions of Stephen and Matilda flowed the after depositions of Edward and Richard, and the solemn act by which the succession was changed in the case of James. Extravagant and unauthorized as their expression of it may appear, they did express the right of a nation to good government. Henry of Winchester, however, "half monk, half soldier," as he was called, possessed too little religious influence to wield a really spiritual power; it was only at the close of Stephen's reign that the nation really found a moral leader in Theobald, the Archbishop of Canterbury. "To the Church," Thomas justly said afterwards, with the proud consciousness of having been Theobald's right hand, "Henry owed his crown and England her deliverance." Thomas was the son of Gilbert Beket, the Portreeve of London, the site of whose house is still marked by the Mercers' chapel in Cheapside; his mother Rohese was the type of the devout woman of her day, and weighed her boy each year on his birthday against money, clothes, and provisions which she gave to the poor. Thomas grew up amidst the Norman barons and clerks who frequented his father's house with a genial freedom of character tempered by the Norman refinement; he passed from the school of Merton to the University of Paris, and returned to fling himself into the life of the young nobles of the time. Tall, handsome, bright-eyed, ready of wit and speech, his firmness of temper showed itself in his very sports; to rescue his hawk which had fallen into the water he once plunged into a millrace, and was all but crushed by the wheel. The loss of his father's wealth drove him to the court of Archbishop Theobald, and he soon became the Primate's confidant in his plans for the rescue of England. Henry, the son of Matilda and Geoffry, had now by the death of his father become master of Normandy and Anjou, while by his marriage with its duchess, Eleanor of Poitou, he had added Acquitaine to his dominions. Thomas, as Theobald's agent, invited Henry to appear in England, and on the Duke's landing the Archbishop interposed between the rival claimants to the crown. The Treaty of Wallingford abolished the evils of the long anarchy; the castles were to be razed, the crown lands resumed, the foreign mercenaries banished from the country.

Thomas of London

1153

Stephen was recognized as King, and in turn acknowledged Henry as his heir. But a year had hardly passed when Stephen's death gave his rival the crown. 1154 to 1189

The picture of England under Stephen in the text is, perhaps, somewhat highly coloured; there are grounds for thinking that the anarchy was neither so universal nor so long continued as was once supposed. For a discussion of the whole question, see Round, "Geoffrey de Mandeville," and an article by Davis in the "English Historical Review" (xviii. 630).

Section VIII.—Henry the Second, 1154—1189

[*Authorities.*—For the first part of the reign, the chief sources are William of Newburgh and Robert of Torigni (De Monte) (Rolls Series), and the Memorials for the History of Thomas Becket (Rolls Series). For the later part of the reign, Benedictus, Giraldus Cambrensis, Gervase of Canterbury, and Radulfus Niger (all except the last in the Rolls Series). The Dialogus de Scaccario and the chief documents of the reign are printed in Stubbs, "Select Charters." Among modern authorities may be mentioned Ramsay, "Angevin Empire"; Hutton, "Becket"; Maitland, "Roman Canon Law in the Church of England"; and Madox, "History of the Exchequer." For a general history of the period, with a complete bibliography, see Davis, "England under the Normans and Angevins."]

Young as he was, Henry mounted the throne with a resolute purpose of government which his reign carried steadily out. His practical, serviceable frame suited the hardest worker of his time. There was something in his build and look, in the square stout frame, the fiery face, the close-cropped hair, the prominent eyes, the bull neck, the coarse strong hands, the bowed legs, that marked out the keen, stirring, coarse-fibred man of business. "He never sits down," said one who observed him closely; "he is always on his legs from morning till night." Orderly in business, careless in appearance, sparing in diet, never resting or giving his servants rest, chatty, inquisitive, endowed with a singular charm of address and strength of memory, obstinate in love or hatred, a fair scholar, a great hunter, his general air that of a rough, passionate, busy man, Henry's personal character told directly on the character of his reign. His accession marks the period of amalgamation, when neighbourhood and traffic and inter-marriage drew Englishmen and Normans so rapidly into a single people, that the two races soon cease to be distinguishable from one another. A national feeling was thus springing up, before which the barriers of the older feudalism were to be swept away. Henry had even less reverence for the feudal past than the men of his day; he was, indeed, utterly without the imagination and reverence which enable men to sympathise with any past at all. He had a practical man's impatience of the obstacles thrown in the way of his reforms by the older constitution of the realm, nor could he understand other men's reluctance to purchase undoubted improvements by the

1154 to 1189

sacrifice of customs and traditions of bygone days. Without any theoretical hostility to the co-ordinate powers of the state, it seemed to him a perfectly reasonable and natural course to trample either baronage or Church under foot to gain his end of good government. He saw clearly, that the remedy for such anarchy as England had endured under Stephen lay in the establishment of a kingly government unembarrassed by any privileges of order or class, administered by royal servants, and in whose public administration the nobles acted simply as delegates of the sovereign. His work was to lie in the organization of judicial and administrative forms which realized this idea, but of the great currents of thought and feeling which were tending in the same direction he knew nothing. What he did for the great moral and social revolution of this time was simply to let it alone. Religion grew more and more identified with patriotism under the eyes of a King who whispered, and scribbled, and looked at picture-books during mass, who never confessed, and cursed God in wild frenzies of blasphemy. Great peoples formed themselves on both sides of the sea round a sovereign who bent the whole force of his mind to hold together an Empire which the growth of nationality must inevitably destroy. There is throughout a tragic grandeur in the irony of Henry's position, that of a Sforza of the fifteenth century set in the midst of the twelfth, building up by patience and policy and craft a composite dominion, alien to the deepest sympathies of his age, and swept away in the end by popular forces to whose existence his very cleverness and activity blinded him. But indirectly, and unconsciously, his policy did more than that of all his predecessors to prepare England for the unity and freedom which the fall of his house was to reveal.

Henry and the Church

He had been placed on the throne, as we have seen, by the Church. His first work was to repair the evils which England had endured till his accession by the restoration of the system of Henry the First; and it was with the aid and counsel of Theobald that the foreign marauders were driven from the realm, the castles demolished in spite of the opposition of the baronage, the King's Court and Exchequer restored. Age and infirmity however warned the Primate to retire from the post of minister, and his power fell into the younger and more vigorous hands of Thomas Beket, who had long acted as his confidential adviser. Thomas, who now became Chancellor, won the personal favour of the King. The two young men had, in Theobald's words, "but one heart and mind"; Henry jested in the Chancellor's hall, or tore his cloak from his shoulders in rough horse-play as they rode through the streets. He loaded his favourite with riches and honours, but there is no ground for thinking that Thomas in any degree influenced his system of rule. Henry's policy seems, for good or evil, to have been throughout his own. As yet, his designs appeared to aim chiefly at power across the Channel, where he was already master of a third of our present France. He had inherited Anjou and Touraine

THE DOMINIONS OF
THE ANGEVINS
English Miles
0 50 100 150
8°
0°
4°
8°
56°
52°
NORTH SEA
R. Spey
R. Don
R. Dee
Esk
Perth
R. Tay
Stirling
R. Forth
Edinburgh
R. Tweed
Alnwyc
Tyne
Newcastle
Durham
R. Tees
Solway
ENGLAND
Humber
York
R. Trent
Newark
The Wash
R. Dee
Mersey
Chester
Anglesey
Severn
R. Wye
Powys
Leicester
R. Ouse
Gloucester
Oxford
London
R. Thames
Canterbury
Bristol
Windsor
Clarendon
Rochester
Dover
Salisbury
Winchester
Milford
IRISH CHANNEL
ULSTER
Armagh
Dundalk
Drogheda
CONNAUGHT
Dublin
R. Shannon
LEINSTER
Limerick
Cashel
MUNSTER
Waterford
Wexford
Bruges
R. Rhine

English Channel
Cherbourg
Havre
Rouen
Caen
NORMANDY
Avranches
Dol
BRITTANY
Rennes
Quimper
MAINE
Le Mans
Angers
ANJOU
Tours
R. Loire
Nantes
Fontrevault
Chinon
Poitou
BAY OF BISCAY
R. Garonne
Limoges
Marche
AQUITAINE
Bordeaux
Auvergne
GASCONY
R. Adour
Toulouse
LANGUEDOC
Avignon
Provence
Marseille
Arles
R. Rhone
R. Isere
C. of Maurienne
Lyons
R. Saone
Burgundy
Champagne
Troyes
Orleans
Blois
Berry
PARIS
R. Seine
R. Marne
Verdun
Trier
48°
44°
3°
4°

from his father, Maine and Normandy from his mother, and the seven provinces of the South, Poitou, Saintonge, Auvergne, Perigord, the Limousin, the Angoumois, and Guienne, belonged to his wife. The actual dominions of Lewis the Seventh were far smaller than his own, and the tact of Beket had bound the French king to Henry's interests by securing for Henry's son the hand of Marguerite, the daughter of Lewis, and in default of sons the heiress of his realm. But even Lewis was roused to resistance when Henry prepared to enforce by arms his claims on Toulouse; he threw himself into the town, and Henry, in spite of his Chancellor's remonstrances, at once withdrew. Thomas had fought bravely throughout the campaign, at the head of the 700 knights who formed his household, but the King had other work for him than war. On Theobald's death he at once forced on the monks of Canterbury, and on Thomas himself, his election as Archbishop. His purpose in this appointment was soon revealed. Henry at once proposed to the bishops that a clerk, convicted of a crime, should be deprived of his orders, and handed over to the King's tribunals. The local courts of the feudal baronage had been roughly shorn of their power by the judicial reforms of Henry the First, and the Church courts, as the Conqueror had created them, with their exclusive right of justice over the whole body of educated men throughout the realm, formed the one great exception to the system which was concentrating all jurisdiction in the hands of the King. The bishops yielded, but opposition came from the very prelate whom Henry had created to enforce his will. From the moment of his appointment Thomas had flung himself with the whole energy of his nature into the part he had to play. At the first intimation of Henry's purpose he had pointed with a laugh to his gay attire—"You are choosing a fine dress to figure at the head of your Canterbury monks"; but once monk and primate, he passed with a fevered earnestness from luxury to asceticism. Even as minister he had opposed the King's designs, and foretold their future opposition: "You will soon hate me as much as you love me now," he said, "for you assume an authority in the affairs of the Church to which I shall never assent." A prudent man might have doubted the wisdom of destroying the only shelter which protected piety or learning against a despot like the Red King, and in the mind of Thomas the ecclesiastical immunities were parts of the sacred heritage of the Church. He stood without support; the Pope advised concession, the bishops forsook him, and Thomas bent at last to agree to the Constitutions, or Concordat between Church and State, which Henry presented to the Council of Clarendon. Many of its clauses were simply a re-enactment of the system established by the Conqueror. The election of bishop or abbot was to take place before royal officers, in the King's chapel, and with the King's assent. The prelate elect was bound to do homage to the King for his lands before consecration, and to hold his lands as a barony from the King, subject to all

1154 to 1189

1163

1162

Constitutions of Clarendon 1164

1154 to 1189

feudal burthens of taxation and attendance in the King's court. No bishop might leave the realm without the royal permission. No tenant in chief or royal servant should be excommunicated, or their land placed under interdict, but by the King's assent. But the legislation respecting ecclesiastical jurisdiction was wholly new. The King's court was to decide whether a suit between clerk and layman, whose nature was disputed, belonged to the Church courts or the King's. A royal officer was to be present in all ecclesiastical proceedings, in order to confine the Bishop's court within its own due limits, and a clerk once convicted there passed at once under the civil jurisdiction. An appeal was left from the Archbishop's court to the King's court for defect of justice. The privilege of sanctuary in churches or churchyards was repealed, so far as property and not persons was concerned. No serf's son could be admitted to orders without his lord's permission. After a passionate refusal the Primate at last set his seal to the Constitutions, but his assent was soon retracted, and the King's savage resentment threw the whole moral advantage of the position into the Archbishop's hands. Vexatious charges were brought against him; in the Council of Northampton his life was said to be in danger, and all urged him to submit. But in the presence of danger the courage of the man rose to its full height; grasping his archiepiscopal cross he entered the royal court, forbade the nobles to condemn him, and appealed to the Papal See. Shouts of "Traitor! traitor!" followed him as he retired. The Primate turned fiercely at the word: "Were I a knight," he retorted, "my sword should answer that foul taunt." At nightfall he fled in disguise, and reached France through Flanders. For six years the contest raged bitterly; at Rome, at Paris, the agents of the two powers intrigued against each other. Henry stooped to acts of the meanest persecution in driving the Primate's kinsmen from England, and in confiscating the lands of their order till the monks of Pontigny should refuse Thomas a home; while Beket himself exhausted the patience of his friends by his violence and excommunications, as well as by the stubbornness with which he clung to the offensive clause "Saving the honour of my order," the addition of which would have practically neutralized the King's reforms. The Pope counselled mildness, the French king for a time withdrew his support, his own clerks gave way at last. "Come up," said one of them bitterly when his horse stumbled on the road, "saving the honour of the Church and my order." But neither warning nor desertion moved the resolution of the Primate. Henry, in dread of Papal excommunication, resolved at last on the coronation of his son, in defiance of the privileges of Canterbury, by the Archbishop of York; but the Pope's hands were now freed by his successes in Italy, and the threat of his interposition forced the King to a show of submission. The Archbishop was allowed to return after a reconciliation with the King at Freteval, and the Kentishmen flocked around him with uproarious welcome as he entered Canter-

Flight of Archbishop Thomas 1164

Beket's return 1170

bury. "This is England," said his clerks, as they saw the white headlands of the coast. "You will wish yourself elsewhere before fifty days are gone," said Thomas, sadly, and his foreboding showed his appreciation of Henry's character. He was now in the royal power, and orders had already been issued by the younger Henry for his arrest, when four knights from the King's court, spurred to outrage by a passionate outburst of their master's wrath, crossed the sea and forced their way into the Archbishop's palace. After a stormy parley with him in his chamber they withdrew to arm, and Thomas was hurried by his clerks into the cathedral. As he reached the steps leading from the transept to the choir his pursuers burst in shouting from the cloisters. "Where," cried Reginald Fitzurse in the dusk of the dimly lighted minster, "where is the traitor, Thomas Beket?" The Primate turned resolutely back: "Here am I, no traitor, but a priest of God," he replied, and again descending the steps he placed himself with his back against a pillar and fronted his foes. All the bravery, the violence of his old knightly life seemed to revive in Thomas as he tossed back the threats and demands of his assailants. "You are our prisoner," shouted Fitzurse, and the four knights seized him to drag him from the church. "Do not touch me, Reginald," shouted the Primate, "pander that you are, you owe me fealty"; and availing himself of his personal strength he shook him roughly off. "Strike, strike," retorted Fitzurse, and blow after blow struck Thomas to the ground. A retainer of Ranulf de Broc with the point of his sword scattered the Primate's brains on the ground. "Let us be off," he cried triumphantly, "this traitor will never rise again." 1154 to 1189

The brutal murder was received with a thrill of horror throughout Christendom; miracles were wrought at the martyr's tomb; he was canonized, and became the most popular of English saints; but Henry's active negotiations with the Papacy averted the excommunication which at first threatened to avenge the deed of blood. The Constitutions of Clarendon were in form partially annulled, and liberty of canonical election restored to bishoprics and abbacies. In reality, however, the victory remained with the King. Throughout his reign ecclesiastical appointments were practically in his hands, the bishops remained faithful to the royal cause, while the King's court asserted its power over the episcopal jurisdiction. The close of the great struggle left Henry free to complete his great work of legal reform. He had already availed himself of the expedition against Toulouse to deliver a crushing blow at the baronage by the commutation of their personal services in the field for a money payment, a "scutage," or "shield money," for each fief. The King thus became master of resources which enabled him to dispense with the military support of his tenants, and to maintain a force of mercenary soldiers in their place. The diminution of the military power of the nobles had been accompanied by measures which robbed them of their legal jurisdiction. The circuits of the judges were restored, and instruc- Henry and the baronage

The great scutage

1154 to 1189 — tions were given them to enter the manors of the barons and make inquiry into their privileges; while the office of sheriff was withdrawn from the great nobles of the shire and entrusted to the lawyers and courtiers who already furnished the staff of justices.

Inquest of sheriffs 1170 — The resentment of the barons found an opportunity of displaying itself when the King's eldest son, whose coronation had played so great a part in the history of Archbishop Thomas, suddenly took refuge with the King of France, and demanded to be put in possession of his English realm. France, Flanders, and Scotland joined the league against Henry, a French army appeared beneath the walls of Rouen, while the King's younger sons, Richard and Geoffry, took up arms in Acquitaine. In England a descent of Flemish mercenaries under the Earl of Leicester had been repulsed by the loyal justiciaries near S. Edmundsbury; but Lewis had no sooner invaded Normandy than the whole extent of the danger was revealed. The Scots crossed the border, Roger de Mowbray rose in revolt in Yorkshire, Earl Ferrars in the midland shires, Hugh Bigod in the eastern counties, while a Flemish fleet prepared to support the insurrection by a descent upon the coast. The murder of Archbishop Thomas still hung around Henry's neck, and his first act in hurrying to meet these perils in England was to prostrate himself before the shrine of the new martyr, and to submit to a public scourging in expiation of his sin. But his penance was hardly wrought when all danger was dispelled by a series of triumphs. The King of Scotland, William the Lion, surprised by the English under cover of a mist, fell into the hands of his justiciary, Ranulf de Glanvil, and at the retreat of the Scots

1174 — the English rebels hastened to lay down their arms. With the army of mercenaries which he had brought to England, Henry was able to raise the siege of Rouen, and to reduce his sons to submission. The revolt of the baronage, easily as it had been subdued, became the pretext for fresh blows at their power. The greatest of these

Assize of Arms 1181 — was his Assize of Arms, which restored the national militia to the place which it had lost at the Conquest. The substitution of scutage for military service had practically freed the crown from the support of the baronage and their feudal retainers; the assize substituted for this feudal organization the older military obligation of every freeman to serve in the defence of the realm. Every knight was forced to arm himself with coat of mail, and shield and lance; every freeholder with lance and hauberk; every burgess and poorer freeman with lance and iron helmet. This universal levy of the armed nation was wholly at the disposal of the King for purposes of defence.

Henry and the law — The measures we have named were only part of Henry's legislation. His reign, it has been truly said, "initiated the rule of law," as distinct from the despotism—tempered in the case of his grandfather by routine—of the earlier Norman kings. It was in successive "Assizes," brief codes issued with the sanction of the great councils of barons and prelates he summoned year by

year, that he perfected, by a system of reforms, the administrative measures which had begun with Henry the First. The fabric of our judicial legislation commences with the Assize of Clarendon, the first object of which was to provide for the order of the realm by reviving the old English system of mutual security, or frank-pledge. No stranger might abide in any place save a borough, and there but for a single night, unless sureties were given for his good behaviour; and the list of such strangers was to be submitted to the itinerant justices. In the provisions of this assize for the repression of crime we find the origin of trial by jury, so often attributed to earlier times. Twelve lawful men of each hundred, with four from each township, were sworn to present those who were known or reputed as criminals within their district for trial by ordeal. The jurors were thus not merely witnesses, but sworn to act as judges also in determining the value of the charge, and it is this double character of Henry's jurors that has descended to our "grand jury," who still remain charged with the duty of presenting criminals for trial after examination of the witnesses against them. Two later steps brought the jury to its modern condition. Under Edward the First witnesses acquainted with the particular fact in question were added in each case to the general jury, and at a later time by the separation of these two classes of jurors the last became simply "witnesses," without any judicial power, while the first ceased to be witnesses at all, and, as our modern jurors, remained only judges of the testimony given. With this assize, too, the practice which had prevailed from the earliest English times, of "compurgation," passed away. Under this system the accused could be acquitted of the charge by the voluntary oath of his neighbours and kinsmen; but for the fifty years which followed the Assize of Clarendon his trial, after the investigation of the grand jury, was found solely in the ordeal or "judgment of God," where innocence was proved by the power of holding hot iron in the hand, or by sinking when flung into the water, for swimming was a proof of guilt. The ordeal by battle or judicial combat introduced by the Normans had, as we have seen in the case of S. Edmundsbury, been excluded from the chartered boroughs. It was the abolition of the whole system of ordeal by the Council of Lateran which led the way to the establishment of what is called a "petty jury" for the final trial of the prisoner. The Assize of Clarendon was expanded in that of Northampton, issued as instructions to the judges after the rebellion of the Barons. Henry, as we have seen, had restored the King's court and the occasional circuits of its justices: at the Council of Northampton he rendered this institution permanent and regular by dividing the kingdom into six districts, to each of which he assigned three itinerant justices. The circuits thus defined correspond roughly with those that exist at the present day. The primary object of these circuits was undoubtedly financial, but the judicial functions of the judges were extended by the abolition of all feudal exemptions from their

1154 to 1189 — *Assize of Clarendon* 1166

Trial by jury

1216

Assize of Northampton 1176

1154 to 1189 — 1178

jurisdiction. The chief danger of the new system lay in the opportunities it afforded to judicial corruption; and so great were its abuses that Henry was soon forced to restrict for a time the number of justices to five—reserving appeals from their court to himself in council. It is from this Upper Court of Appeal, which he thus erected, that the judicial powers now exercised by the Privy Council are derived, as well as the equitable jurisdiction of the Chancellor. In the next century it becomes the Great Council of the realm, from which the Privy Council drew its legislative, and the House of Lords its judicial character. The court of Star Chamber and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council are later offshoots of Henry's Council. The King's Court, which became inferior to this higher jurisdiction, divided after the Great Charter into the three distinct courts of the King's Bench, the Exchequer, and the Common Pleas, which by the close of the reign of Henry the Third received distinct judges, and became for all purposes separate.

Death of Henry the Second

Henry was now in appearance thoroughly master of his dominions, and an invasion, which we shall tell hereafter, annexed Ireland to his English crown. But the course of triumph and legislation was rudely broken by the quarrels and revolts of his sons. The successive deaths of Henry and Geoffry were followed

1189

by intrigues between Richard, who had been entrusted with Acquitaine, and Philip, who had succeeded Lewis on the throne of France. The plot broke out at last in actual conflict; Richard did homage to Philip, and the allied forces suddenly appeared before Le Mans, from which Henry retreated in headlong flight towards Normandy. From a height where he halted to look back on the burning city, so dear to him as his birthplace, the old King hurled his curse against God: "Since Thou hast taken from me the town I loved best, where I was born and bred, and where my father lies buried, I will have my revenge on Thee too—I will rob Thee of that thing Thou lovest most in me." Death was upon him, and the longing of a dying man drew him to the home of his race. Tours fell as he lay at Saumur, and the hunted King was driven to beg mercy from his foes. They gave him the list of the conspirators against him: at the head of them was his youngest and best-loved son, John. "Now," he said, as he turned his face to the wall, "let things go as they will—I care no more for myself or for the world." He was borne to Chinon by the silvery waters of Vienne, and muttering, "Shame, shame on a conquered King," passed sullenly away.

The statement in the text that Henry II. inherited Normandy and Maine from his mother is hardly accurate; his acquisition of these provinces was the outcome of their conquest by his father, Geoffrey, during the reign of Stephen.

Becket declined to seal the Constitutions of Clarendon, a fact upon which he relied in his later repudiation of his partial consent to them.

Section IX.—The Fall of the Angevins, 1189—1204

1189 to 1204

[*Authorities.*—Benedictus is continued after 1192 by Roger Hoveden (Rolls Series). Ralph de Diceto, "Imagines Historiarum" (Rolls Series), are of particular value. The best account of the crusade is found in "L'estoire de la Guerre Sainte," by Ambroise (edited Gaston Paris), of which the "Itinerarium Regis Ricardi" (Rolls Series) seems to be little more than a Latin version, though it is possible that both works are really based upon a third. The "Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal" (edited Société de l'Histoire de France) is a metrical biography of William Marshall. For Philip Augustus, the best authority is William le Breton, "Gesta Philippi," and "Philippeis" (Bouquet, Recueil). Of modern works, in addition to those already mentioned, Round, "Commune of London," is important.]

Richard the First

1190 to 1194

We need not follow Richard in the Crusade which occupied the beginning of his reign, and which left England for four years without a ruler,—in his quarrels in Sicily, his conquest of Cyprus, his victory at Jaffa, his fruitless march upon Jerusalem, the truce he concluded with Saladin, his shipwreck as he returned, or his two imprisonments in Germany. Freed at last from his captivity, he found himself among dangers which he was too clear-sighted to undervalue. Less wary than his father, less ingenious in his political conceptions than John, Richard was far from a mere soldier. A love of adventure, a pride in sheer physical strength, here and there a romantic generosity, jostled roughly with the craft, the unscrupulousness, the violence of his race; but he was at heart a statesman, cool and patient in the execution of his plans as he was bold in their conception. "The devil is loose; take care of yourself," Philip had written to John at the news of the King's release. In the French king's case a restless ambition was spurred to action by insults which he had borne during the Crusade, and he had availed himself of Richard's imprisonment to invade Normandy. John, traitor to his brother as to his father, had joined his alliance; while the Lords of Acquitaine rose in revolt under the troubadour Bertrand de Born. Jealousy of the rule of strangers, weariness of the turbulence of the mercenary soldiers of the Angevins or of the greed and oppression of their financial administration, combined with an impatience of their firm government and vigorous justice to alienate the *noblesse* of their provinces on the Continent. Loyalty among the people there was none; even Anjou, the home of their race, drifted towards Philip as steadily as Poitou. England was drained by the tax for Richard's ransom, and irritated by his resumption on his return of all the sales by which he had raised funds for his Crusade. For some time he could do nothing but hold Philip in check on the Norman frontier, surprise his treasure at Freteval, and reduce to submission the rebels of Acquitaine. A truce, which these successes wrested from Philip, gave him breathing-space for a final blow at his opponent.

1194 to 1196

Château Gaillard

Extortion had wrung from England wealth which again filled the royal treasury, and Richard's bribes detached Flanders from the French alliance, and united the Counts of Chartres, Champagne,

1189 to 1204

and Boulogne with the Bretons in a revolt against Philip. Otho, a nephew of Richard's, was now one of two rival claimants of the Empire, and William Longchamp of Ely was busy knitting an alliance which would bring the German lances to bear on the King of Paris. But the security of Normandy was requisite to the success of these wider plans, and Richard saw that its defence could no longer rest on the loyalty of the Norman people. His father might trace his descent through Matilda from the line of Hrolf, but the Angevin ruler was in fact a stranger to the Norman. Nor did Henry appeal to his subjects' loyalty; he held them, as he held his other provinces, by a strictly administrative bond, as a foreign master, and guarded their border with foreign troops. Richard only exaggerated his father's policy. It was impossible for a Norman to recognize his Duke with any real sympathy in the Angevin prince whom he saw moving along the border at the head of Brabançon mercenaries, in whose camp the old names of the Norman baronage were missing, and Merchadè, a mere Gascon ruffian, held supreme command. The purely military site which Richard selected for the new fortress with which he guarded the border, showed his realization of the fact that Normandy could now only be held in a military way. As a monument of warlike skill his "Saucy Castle," Château Gaillard, stands first among the fortresses of the middle ages. Richard fixed its site where the Seine bends suddenly at Gaillon in a great semicircle to the north, and where the valley of Les Andelys breaks the line of the chalk cliffs along its bank. Blue masses of woodland crown the distant hills; within the river curve lies a dull reach of flat meadow, round which the Seine, broken with green islets, and dappled with the grey and blue of the sky, flashes like a silver bow on its way to Rouen. The castle formed a part of an entrenched camp which Richard designed to cover his Norman capital. Approach by the river was blocked by a stockade and a bridge of boats, by a fort on the islet in mid stream, and by the tower which the King built in the valley of the Gambon, then an impassable marsh. In the angle between this valley and the Seine, on a spur of the chalk hills which only a narrow neck of land connects with the general plateau, rose, at the height of 300 feet above the river, the crowning fortress of the whole. Its outworks and the walls which connected it with the town and stockade have for the most part gone, but time and the hand of man have done little to destroy the fortifications themselves—the fosse, hewn deep into the solid rock, with casements hollowed out along its sides, the fluted walls of the citadel, the huge donjon looking down on the brown roofs and huddled gables of Les Andelys. Even now, in its ruin, we can understand the triumphant outburst of its royal builder as he saw it rising against the sky: "How pretty a child is mine, this child of but one year old!"

Richard's death

The easy reduction of Normandy on the fall of Château Gaillard at a later time proved Richard's foresight; but foresight and saga-

city were mingled in him with a brutal violence and a callous indifference to honour. The treaty which interrupted his war with Philip provided that Andelys should not be fortified, and three months after its ratification he was building his "Saucy Castle." "I will take it, were its walls of iron," Philip exclaimed in wrath as he saw it rise. "I would hold it, were the walls of butter," was the defiant answer of his foe. It was Church land, and the Archbishop of Rouen laid Normandy under interdict at its seizure, but the King met the interdict with mockery, and intrigued with Rome till the censure was withdrawn. He was just as defiant of a "rain of blood," whose fall scared his courtiers. "Had an angel from heaven bid him abandon his work," says a cool observer, "he would have answered with a curse." The twelvemonth's hard work, in fact, by securing the Norman frontier, set Richard free to deal his long-meditated blow at Philip. Money only was wanting, and the King listened with more than the greed of his race to the rumour that a treasure had been found in the fields of the Limousin. Twelve knights of gold seated round a golden table were the find, it was said, of the Lord of Chaluz. Treasure-trove at any rate there was, and Richard prowled around the walls, but the castle held stubbornly out till the King's greed passed into savage menace; he would hang all, he swore—man, woman, the very child at the breast. In the midst of his threats an arrow from the walls struck him down. He died as he had lived, pardoning with kingly generosity the archer who had shot him, outraging with bitter mockery the priests who exhorted him to repentance and restitution. 1183 to 1204 1199

The jealousy of province against province broke out fiercely at his death. John was acknowledged as King in England and Normandy, while Anjou, Maine, and Touraine did homage to Arthur, the son of his elder brother Geoffry, the late Duke of Brittany. The ambition of Philip, who protected his cause, turned the day against Arthur; the Angevins rose against the French garrisons with which the French King practically annexed the country, and John was at last owned as master of the whole dominion of his house. A fresh outbreak of war was fatal to his rival; surprised at the siege of Mirabeau by a rapid march of the King, Arthur was taken prisoner to Rouen, and murdered there, as men believed, by his uncle's hand. The brutal outrage at once roused Poitou in revolt, Anjou and Touraine welcomed Philip, and the French king marched straight on Normandy. The ease with which its conquest was effected is explained by the utter absence of any popular resistance on the part of the Normans themselves. Half a century before the sight of a Frenchman in the land would have roused every peasant to arms from Avranches to Dieppe, but town after town surrendered at the mere summons of Philip, and the conquest was hardly over before Normandy settled down into the most loyal of the provinces of France. Much of this was due to the wise liberality with which Philip met the The loss of Normandy 1200 1203

1189 to 1204

claims of the towns to independence and self-government, as well as to the overpowering force and military ability with which the conquest was effected. But the utter absence of all opposition sprang, as we have seen, from a deeper cause; to the Norman, his transfer from John to Philip was a mere passing from one foreign master to another, and foreigner for foreigner Philip was the less alien of the two. Between France and Normandy there had been as many years of friendship as of strife; between Norman and Angevin lay a century of bitterest hate. Moreover, the subjection to France was the realization in fact of a dependence which had always existed in theory; Philip entered Rouen as the over-lord of its Dukes, while the submission to the house of Anjou had been the most humiliating of all submissions, the submission to an equal.

It was the consciousness of this temper in the Norman people that forced John to abandon all hope of resistance on the failure of his attempt to relieve Château Gaillard, by the siege of which Philip commenced his invasion. The skill with which the combined movements for its relief were planned proves the King's military ability. The besiegers were parted into two masses by the Seine: the bulk of their forces were camped in the level space within the bend of the river, while one division was thrown across it to occupy the valley of the Gambon, and sweep the country around of its provisions. John proposed to cut the French army in two by destroying the bridge of boats which formed the only communication between the two bodies, while the whole of his own forces flung themselves on the rear of the French division encamped in the *cul de sac* formed by the river-bend, and without any exit save the bridge. Had the attack been carried out as ably as it was planned, it must have ended in Philip's ruin; but the two assaults were not made simultaneously, and were successively repulsed. The repulse was followed by the utter collapse of the military system by which the Angevins had held Normandy; John's treasury was exhausted, and his mercenaries passed over to the foe. The King's despairing appeal to the Duchy itself came too late; its nobles were already treating with Philip, and the towns were incapable of resisting the siege train of the French. It was despair of any aid from Normandy that drove John over sea to seek it as fruitlessly from England, but with the fall of Château Gaillard, after a gallant struggle, the province passed without a struggle into the French king's hands. On its loss hung the destinies of England, and the interest that attaches one to the grand ruin on the heights of Les Andelys is, that it represents the ruin of a system as well as of a camp. From its dark donjon and broken walls we see not merely the pleasant vale of Seine, but the sedgy flats of our own Runnymede.

The part played by Bertrand de Born in rousing the south against Henry II. has been much exaggerated; it is inaccurate to describe him as the leader of the lords of Aquitaine. For his poems and importance, see Stimming, "Bertran von Born."

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT CHARTER, 1204—1265

Section I.—English Literature under the Norman and Angevin Kings

[*Authorities.*—The best account of the literature of this period is found in Jusserand, "Histoire Littéraire du Peuple Anglais." For Giraldus Cambrensis, see the edition of his works in the Rolls Series. Walter Map, "De Nugis Curialium," and his Poems, have been edited for the Camden Society. Layamon has been edited by Madden. The "Tractatus de Legibus," attributed to Glanvill, but more probably the work of Hubert Walter, was edited in the seventeenth century; extracts are printed in Stubbs, "Select Charters," and a new complete edition is in course of preparation. Geoffrey of Monmouth, "Historia Britonum," was edited by Giles.]

It is in a review of the literature of England during the period that we have just traversed that we shall best understand the new English people with which John, when driven from Normandy, found himself face to face.

The literary revival

In his contest with Beket, Henry the Second had been powerfully aided by the silent revolution which now began to part the purely literary class from the Church. During the earlier ages of our history we have seen literature springing up in ecclesiastical schools, and protecting itself against the ignorance and violence of the time under ecclesiastical privileges. With but two exceptions, in fact, those of Ælfred and Ethelweard, all our writers from Bæda to the days of the Angevins are clergy or monks. The revival of letters which followed the Conquest was a purely ecclesiastical revival; the intellectual impulse which Bec had given to Normandy travelled across the Channel with the new Norman abbots who were established in the greater English monasteries; and writing-rooms or scriptoria, where the chief works of Latin literature, patristic or classical, were copied and illuminated, the lives of saints compiled, and entries noted in the monastic chronicle, formed from this time a part of every religious house of any importance. Fruitful of results as it had been in France, the philosophical and devotional impulse given by Anselm produced no English work of theology or metaphysics; it is characteristic of the national temper that the literary revival at once took the older historical form. At Durham, Turgot and Simeon threw into Latin shape the national annals to the time of Henry the First with an especial regard to northern affairs, while the earlier events of Stephen's reign were noted down by two Priors of Hexham in the wild borderland between England and the Scots. These, however, were the colourless jottings of mere annalists; it was in the Scriptorium

of Canterbury, in Osbern's lives of the English saints Dunstan and Elfeg, or in Eadmer's record of the struggle of Anselm against the Red King and his successor, that we see the first indications of a distinctively English feeling telling on the new literature. The national impulse is yet more conspicuous in the two historians that followed. The war-songs of the English conquerors of Britain were preserved by Henry, the Archdeacon of Huntingdon, who wove them into annals compiled from Bæda and the Chronicle; while William, the librarian of Malmesbury, has industriously collected the lighter ballads which embodied the popular traditions of the English Kings. The revival of English patriotism is yet more distinctly visible in the Sayings of Ælfred and the legend of Hereward's struggle in the Fens of Ely, whose composition may probably be placed in the reign of Henry the Second.

Literature and the Court

We may see the tendency of English literature at the close of the Norman period in William of Malmesbury. In himself, as in his work, he marks the fusion of the conquerors and the conquered, for he was of both English and Norman parentage, and his sympathies were as divided as his blood. In the form and style of his writings he shows the influence of those classical studies which were now reviving throughout Christendom. Monk as he is, he discards the older ecclesiastical models and the annalistic form. Events are grouped together with no strict reference to time, while the lively narrative flows rapidly and loosely along, with constant breaks of digression, over the general history of Europe and the Church. It is in this change of historic spirit that William takes his place as first of the more statesmanlike and philosophic school of historians who began soon to arise in direct connection with the Court, and amongst whom the author of the chronicle which commonly bears the name of "Benedict of Peterborough," with his continuator Roger of Howden, are the most conspicuous. Both held judicial offices under Henry the Second, and it is to their position at Court that they owe the fulness and accuracy of their information as to affairs at home and abroad, their copious supply of official documents, and the purely political temper with which they regard the conflict of Church and State in their time. The same freedom from ecclesiastical bias, combined with remarkable critical ability, is found in the history of William, the Canon of Newborough. From the time of Henry the First, in fact, the English court had become the centre of a distinctly secular literature. The treatise of Ranulf de Glanvill, the justiciar of Henry the Second, is the earliest work on English law, as that of the royal treasurer, Richard Fitz-Neal, on the Exchequer, is the earliest on English government. Romance had long before taken root in the court of Henry the First, where, under the patronage of Queen Maud, the "Dreams of Arthur," so long cherished by the Celts of Brittany, which had travelled to Wales in the train of the exile Rhys ap Tewdor, took shape in the History of the Britons by Geoffry of Monmouth. Myth, legend, tradition, the classical

William of Malmesbury

The Court historians

Geoffry of Monmouth

pedantry of the day, the Welsh dreams of future triumph over the Saxon, the memories of the Crusades and of the world-wide dominion of Charles the Great, were mingled together by this daring fabulist in a work whose popularity became at once immense. Alfred of Beverly transferred his inventions into the region of sober history, while two Norman *trouveurs*, Gaimar and Wace, translated them into French verse. So complete was the credence they obtained, that Arthur's tomb at Glastonbury was visited by Henry the Second, while the child of his son Geoffry and of Constance of Brittany bore the name of the Celtic hero. Out of Geoffry's creation grew little by little the poem of the Table Round. Brittany, which had mingled with the story of Arthur the older and more mysterious legend of the Enchanter Merlin, lent that of Lancelot to the wandering minstrels of the day, who moulded it, as they wandered from hall to hall, into the familiar song of knighthood wrested from its loyalty by the love of woman. The stories of Tristram and Gawayne, at first as independent as that of Lancelot, were drawn with it into the whirlpool of Arthurian romance; and when the Church, jealous of the popularity of the legends of chivalry, invented as a counteracting influence the poem of the Sacred Dish, the San Graal which held the blood of the Cross, invisible to all eyes but those of the pure in heart, the genius of a Court poet, Walter de Map, wove the rival legends together, sent Arthur and his knights wandering over sea and land in the quest of the San Graal, and crowned the work by the figure of Sir Galahad, the type of ideal knighthood, without fear and without reproach.

Walter de Map

Walter was one of two remarkable men who stand before us as the representatives of a sudden outburst of literary, social, and religious criticism which followed the growth of romance and the appearance of a freer historical tone in the court of the two Henries. Born on the Welsh border, a student at Paris, a favourite with the King, a royal chaplain, justiciary, and ambassador, the genius of Walter de Map was as various as it was prolific. He is as much at his ease in sweeping together the chit-chat of the time in his "Courtly Trifles," as in creating the character of Sir Galahad. But he only rose to his fullest strength when he turned from the fields of romance to that of Church reform, and embodied the ecclesiastical abuses of his day in the figure of his "Bishop Goliath." The whole spirit of Henry and his Court in their struggle with Becket is reflected and illustrated in the apocalypse and confession of this imaginary prelate. Picture after picture strips the veil from the corruption of the mediæval Church, its indolence, its thirst for gain, its secret immorality. The whole body of the clergy, from Pope to hedge-priest, is painted as busy in the chase for gain; what escapes the bishop is snapped up by the archdeacon, what escapes the archdeacon is nosed and hunted down by the dean, while a host of minor officials prowl hungrily around these greater marauders. Out of the crowd of figures which fills the

canvas of the satirist, pluralist vicars, abbots "purple as their wines," monks feeding and chattering together like parrots in the refectory, rises the Philistine Bishop, light of purpose, void of conscience, lost in sensuality, drunken, unchaste, the Goliath who sums up the enormities of all, and against whose forehead this new David slings his sharp pebble of the brook. Powerless to hold the wine-cup, Goliath trolls out the famous drinking-song that a hundred translations have made familiar to us:—

> "Die I must, but let me die drinking in an inn!
> Hold the wine-cup to my lips sparkling from the bin!
> So, when angels flutter down to take me from my sin,
> 'Ah, God have mercy on this sot,' the cherubs will begin!"

Gerald de Barri

The spirit of criticism which assailed in Walter the ecclesiastical system of the day, ventured in Gerald de Barri to attack its system of civil government. Gerald is the father of our popular literature, as he is the originator of the political and ecclesiastical pamphlet. Welsh blood (as his usual name of Giraldus Cambrensis implies) mixed with Norman in his veins, and something of the restless Celtic fire runs alike through his writings and his life. A busy scholar at Paris, a reforming archdeacon in Wales, the wittiest of Court chaplains, the most troublesome of bishops, Gerald became the gayest and most amusing of all the authors of his time. In his hands the stately Latin tongue took the vivacity and picturesqueness of the jongleur's verse. Reared as he had been in classical studies, he threw pedantry contemptuously aside. "It is better to be dumb than not to be understood," is his characteristic apology for the novelty of his style: "new times require new fashions, and so I have thrown utterly aside the old and dry method of some authors, and aimed at adopting the fashion of speech which is actually in vogue to-day." His tract on the conquest of Ireland and his account of Wales, the latter of which is, in fact, a report of a journey undertaken in that country with Archbishop Baldwin, illustrate his rapid faculty of careless observation, his audacity, and his good sense. They are just the sort of lively, dashing letters that we find in the correspondence of a modern journal. There is the same modern tone in his political pamphlets; his profusion of jests, his fund of anecdote, the aptness of his quotations, his natural shrewdness and critical acumen, the clearness and vivacity of his style, are backed by a fearlessness and impetuosity that made him a dangerous assailant even to such a ruler as Henry the Second. The invectives in which Gerald poured out his resentment against the Angevins are the cause of half the scandal about Henry and his sons which has found its way into history. His life was wasted in an ineffectual struggle to secure the see of St. David's, but the pungent pen of the pamphleteer played its part in rousing the spirit of the nation to its struggle with the crown.

Revival of the English tongue

It is only, however, as the writings of Englishmen that Latin or French works like these can be claimed as part of English literature. Banished from Court by the Conquest, superseded in

legal documents by Latin, the English tongue ceased to be literary. The spoken tongue of the nation at large remained of course English as before; William himself had tried to learn it, that he might administer justice to his subjects; but, like all popular dialects when freed from the control of a written literature, it tended to lose its grammatical complexities of gender and inflexion, while a few new words crept in from the language of the conquerors. One great monument indeed of English prose, the English Chronicle itself, lingered on in the Abbey of Peterborough, but it died out amidst the miseries of Stephen's reign, and no great work in English appeared for more than half a century. Its revival coincides with the loss of Normandy and the return of John to his island realm. "There was a priest in the land whose name was Layamon; he was son of Leovenath: may the Lord be gracious to him! He dwelt at Earnley, a noble church on the bank of Severn (good it seemed to him!) near Radstone, where he read books. It came in mind to him and in his chiefest thought that he would tell the noble deeds of England, what the men were named, and whence they came, who first had English land." Journeying far and wide over the land, the priest of Earnley found Bæda and Wace, the books too of S. Albin and S. Austin. "Layamon laid down these books and turned the leaves; he beheld them lovingly: may the Lord be merciful to him! Pen he took with fingers and wrote a book-skin, and the true word set together and compressed the three books into one." Layamon's church is now Areley, near Bewdley, in Worcestershire: his poem was in fact an amplified "Brut," with insertions from Bæda. Historically it is worthless, but as a monument of our language it is beyond all price. After Norman and Angevin English remained unchanged. In more than thirty thousand lines less than fifty Norman words are to be found. Even the old poetic tradition remains the same; the alliterative metre of the earlier verse is only slightly affected by rhyme, the similes are the few natural similes of Cædmon, the battles are painted with the same rough, simple joy. It is by no mere accident that the English tongue thus wakes again into written life on the eve of the great struggle between the nation and its King. The artificial forms imposed by the Conquest were falling away from the people as from its literature, and a new England, quickened by the Celtic vivacity of de Map and the Norman daring of Gerald, stood forth to its conflict with John.

1200

Layamon

1204 to 1215

Section II.—John, 1204—1215

[*Authorities.*—Wendover, "Flores Historiarum" (English Historical Society), and Matthew Paris, "Chronica Majora" (Rolls Series), are the chief authorities; the latter is, until 1235, a revision of the former. Walter of Coventry and the Monastic Annals of Waverley, Dunstable, and Burton are all important, as is the "Chronicon Anglicanum" of Ralph of Coggeshall (all in the Rolls Series). The Royal Rolls begin to assume importance with the reign of John. The best modern account of the reign as a whole is to be found in Norgate, "John Lackland."]

John

"Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of John." The terrible verdict of the King's contemporaries has passed into the sober judgment of history. Externally John possessed all the quickness, the vivacity, the cleverness, the good-humour, the social charm which distinguished his house. He was fond of books and learned men, he was the friend of Gerald as he was the student of Pliny. He had a strange gift of attracting friends and of winning the love of women. But in his inner soul John was the worst outcome of the Angevins. He united into one mass of wickedness their insolence, their selfishness, their unbridled lust, their cruelty and tyranny, their shamelessness, their superstition, their cynical indifference to honour or truth. In mere boyhood he had torn with brutal levity the beards of the Irish chieftains who came to own him as their lord. His ingratitude and perfidy had brought down his father's hairs with sorrow to the grave. To his brother he had been the worst of traitors. All Christendom believed him to be the murderer of his nephew, Arthur of Brittany. He had abandoned one wife and was faithless to another. His punishments were refinements of cruelty, the starvation of children, the crushing old men under copes of lead. His court was a brothel where no woman was safe from the royal lust, and where his cynicism loved to publish the news of his victims' shame. He was as craven in his superstition as he was daring in his impiety. He scoffed at priests and turned his back on the mass, even amidst the solemnities of his coronation, but he never stirred on a journey without hanging relics round his neck. But with the supreme wickedness of his race he inherited its profound ability. His plan for the relief of Château Gaillard, the rapid march by which he shattered Arthur's hopes at Mirabeau, showed an inborn genius for war. In the rapidity and breadth of his political combinations he far surpassed the statesmen of his time. Throughout his reign we see him quick to discern the difficulties of his position, and inexhaustible in the resources with which he met them. The overthrow of his continental power only spurred him to the formation of a great league which all but brought Philip to the ground; and the sudden revolt of all England was parried by a shameless alliance with the Papacy. The closer study of John's history clears away the charges of sloth and incapacity with which men tried to explain the greatness of his fall. The awful lesson of his life rests on the fact that it was no

weak and indolent voluptuary, but the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins who lost Normandy, became the vassal of the Pope, and perished in a struggle of despair against English freedom. 1204 to 1215

The whole energies of the King were bent on the recovery of his lost dominions on the Continent. He impatiently collected money and men for the support of the adherents of the house of Anjou, who were still struggling against the arms of France in Poitou and Guienne, and had assembled an army at Portsmouth in the summer of 1205, when his project was suddenly thwarted by the resolute opposition of the Primate and the Earl Mareschal. So completely had both the baronage and the Church been humbled by his father, that the attitude of their representatives indicated the new spirit of national freedom which was rising around the King. John at once braced himself to the struggle. The death of Hubert Walter, a few days after this successful protest, enabled him, as it seemed, to neutralize the opposition of the Church by placing a creature of his own at its head. John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, was elected by the monks of Canterbury at his bidding and enthroned as Primate. In a previous though informal gathering, however, the convent had already chosen its sub-prior, Reginald, as Archbishop, and the rival claimants hastened to appeal to Rome, but the result of their appeal was a startling one both for themselves and for the King. Innocent the Third, who now occupied the Papal throne, had pushed its claims of supremacy over Christendom further than any of his predecessors: resolved to free the Church of England from the royal tyranny, he quashed both the contested elections, and commanded the monks who appeared before him to elect in his presence Stephen Langton to the archiepiscopal see. Personally, a better choice could not have been made, for Stephen was a man who by sheer weight of learning and holiness of life had risen to the dignity of Cardinal, and whose after career placed him in the front rank of English patriots. But in itself the step was a violent usurpation of the rights both of the Church and of the crown. The King at once met it with defiance, and replied to the Papal threats of interdict if Langton were any longer excluded from his see, by a counter threat that the interdict should be followed by the banishment of the clergy and the mutilation of every Italian he could seize in the realm. Innocent, however, was not a man to draw back from his purpose, and the interdict fell at last upon the land. All worship save that of a few privileged orders, all administration of the Sacrament save that of private baptism, ceased over the length and breadth of the country: the church-bells were silent, the dead lay unburied on the ground. The King replied by confiscating the lands of the clergy who observed the interdict, by subjecting them, in spite of their privileges, to the royal courts, and often by leaving outrages on them unpunished. "Let him go," said John, when a Welshman was brought before him for the murder of a priest, "he has killed my enemy!" Two years passed before the Pope proceeded to the

The interdict

1208

1204 to 1215

further sentence of excommunication. John was now formally cut off from the pale of the Church; but the new sentence was met with the same defiance as the old. Five of the bishops had fled over sea, and secret disaffection was spreading widely, but there was no public avoidance of the excommunicated King. An Archdeacon of Norwich, who withdrew from his service, was crushed to death under a cope of lead, and the hint was sufficient to prevent either prelate or noble from following his example. Only one weapon now remained in Innocent's hands. An excommunicate king had ceased to be a Christian, or to have claims on the obedience of Christian subjects. As spiritual heads of Christendom, the Popes had ere now asserted their right to remove such a ruler from his throne, and to give it to a worthier than he. It was this right which Innocent asserted in the deposition of John. He proclaimed a crusade against him, and committed the execution of his sentence to Philip of France. John met it with the same scorn as before. His insolent disdain suffered the Roman deacon Pandulf to proclaim his deposition to his very face at Northampton. An enormous army gathered at his call on Barham Down, and the English fleet dispelled all danger of invasion on the part of Philip's forces now assembled on the opposite coast, by crossing the Channel, capturing some ships, and burning Dieppe.

John's deposition 1212

The Pope's vassal

At the very moment of apparent triumph John suddenly gave way. It was the revelation of a danger at home which shook him out of his contemptuous inaction. From the first he had guarded jealously against any revolt of the baronage during his struggle with the Church; he had demanded the surrender of their children as hostages for their loyalty; he had crushed a rising of the Irish nobles in the midst of the interdict, and foiled by rapid marches the efforts at rebellion which Innocent had stirred up in Scotland and Wales. Barbarous cruelties celebrated his triumph; he drove De Braose, one of the most powerful of the Lords Marchers, to die in exile, while his wife and grandchildren were believed to have been starved to death in the royal prisons. On the nobles who still clung panic-stricken to the court of the excommunicate king, John heaped outrages worse than death. Illegal exactions, the seizure of their castles, the preference shown to foreigners, were small provocations compared with his attacks on the honour of their wives and daughters. Powerless to resist openly, the baronage plunged almost to a man into secret conspiracies; many promised aid to Philip on his landing, while the King of Scots, with Llewellyn of Wales, were busy in corresponding with the Pope. It was with the proofs of this universal disaffection in his hands that Pandulf summoned John to submit; but the ambition of the King seconded his fears. Vile as he was, he possessed in the highest degree the ability of his race, and in the wide combination he had long been planning against Philip he showed himself superior, as a diplomatist, to Henry himself. The barons of Poitou were already sworn to aid him in the South. He had purchased the alliance of the

Count of Flanders in the North. His nephew Otho, one of the claimants of the Empire, had engaged to bring the knighthood of Germany to his aid. But for the success of this vast combination a reconciliation with the Pope was indispensable, for none of his allies, save perhaps Otho, could fight side by side with an excommunicate king. Once resolved on, his submission was effected with a shameless cynicism. Not only did John promise to receive Langton, and to compensate the clergy for their losses, not only did he grovel at the feet of the exiled bishops on their return, but, amidst the wonder and disgust of his Court, he solemnly resigned both crown and realms into the hands of the legate, and received them back again to be held by fealty and homage as a vassal of the Pope. 1204 to 1215

England thrilled at the news with a sense of national shame such as she had never felt before. "He has become the Pope's man," the whole country murmured; "he has forfeited the very name of King; from a free man he has degraded himself into a serf." But as a political measure the success of John's submission was complete. The French army at once broke up in impotent rage, but on its advance towards Flanders five hundred English ships under the Earl of Salisbury fell upon the fleet which accompanied it along the coast, and utterly destroyed it. The great league which John had so long matured at last disclosed itself. The King himself landed in Poitou, rallied its barons round him, crossed the Loire in triumph, and recaptured Angers, the home of his race. At the same time Otho, reinforcing his German army by the knighthood of Flanders and Boulogne, as well as by a body of English mercenaries, invaded France from the north. For the moment Philip seemed lost, and yet on the fortunes of Philip hung the fortunes of English freedom. But in this crisis of her fate France was true to herself and her King; the townsmen marched from every borough to Philip's rescue, priests led their flocks to battle with the sacred banners flying at their head. The two armies met near the bridge of Bouvines, between Lille and Tournay, and from the first the day went against the invaders. The Flemish were the first to fly, then the German centre was overwhelmed by the numbers of the French, last of all the English on the right were broken by the fierce onset of the Bishop of Beauvais, who charged mace in hand, and struck the Earl of Salisbury to the ground. The news of this complete overthrow reached John in the midst of his triumphs in the South, and scattered his hopes to the winds. He was at once deserted by the Poitevin *noblesse*, and a precipitate retreat alone enabled him to return, baffled and humiliated, to his island kingdom. The Battle of Bouvines

It is to the victory of Bouvines that England owes her Great Charter. From the hour of his submission to the Papacy, John's vengeance on the barons had only been delayed till he should return a conqueror from the fields of France. A sense of their danger nerved the nobles to resistance; they refused to follow the King on Stephen Langton

1204 to 1215

his foreign campaign till the excommunication were removed, and when it was removed they still refused, on the plea that they were not bound to serve in wars without the realm. Furious as he was at this new attitude of resistance, the time had not yet come for vengeance, and John sailed for Poitou with the dream of a great victory which should lay Philip and the barons alike at his feet. He returned from his defeat to find the nobles no longer banded together in secret conspiracies, but openly united in a definite claim of liberty and law. The author of this great change was the new Archbishop whom Innocent had set on the throne of Canterbury. From the moment of his landing in England, Stephen Langton had assumed the constitutional position of the Primate as champion of the old English customs and law against the personal despotism of the Kings. As Anselm had withstood William the Red, as Theobald had rescued England from the lawlessness of Stephen, so Langton prepared to withstand and rescue his country from the tyranny of John. At his first meeting with the King he called on him to swear to the observance of the laws of the Confessor, a phrase in which the whole of the national liberties were summed up. Churchman as he was, he protested against the royal homage to the Pope; and when John threatened vengeance on the barons for their refusal to sail with him to Poitou, Langton menaced him with excommunication if he assailed his subjects by any but due process of law. Far, however, from being satisfied with resistance such as this to isolated acts of tyranny, it was the Archbishop's aim to restore on a formal basis the older freedom of the realm. In a private meeting of the barons at S. Paul's he produced the Charter of Henry the First, and the enthusiasm with which it was welcomed showed the sagacity with which the Primate had chosen his ground for the coming struggle. All hope, however, hung on the fortunes of the French campaign; it was the victory at Bouvines that broke the spell of terror, and within a few days of the King's landing the barons again met at S. Edmundsbury, and swore on the high altar to demand from him, if needful by force of arms, the observance of Henry's Charter and of the Confessor's Law. At Christmas they presented themselves in arms before the King, and preferred their claim. The few months that followed showed John that he stood alone in the land; nobles and Churchmen were alike arrayed against him, and the commissioners whom he sent to plead his cause at the County Courts brought back the news that no man would help him against the Charter. At Easter the barons again gathered in arms at Brackley, and renewed their claim. "Why do they not ask for my kingdom?" cried John in a burst of passion; but the whole country rose as one man at his refusal. London threw open her gates to the army of the barons, now organized under Robert Fitz-Walter, "the marshal of the army of God and holy Church." The example of the capital was at once followed by Exeter and Lincoln; promises of aid came from Scotland and Wales; the Northern nobles

marched hastily to join their comrades in London. With seven horsemen in his train, John found himself face to face with a nation in arms. He had summoned mercenaries and appealed to his liege lord, the Pope; but summons and appeal were alike too late. Nursing wrath in his heart the tyrant bowed to necessity, and summoned the barons to a conference at Runnymede. 1215 to 1217

Green's account of the election of Langton requires some revision. John consented to the election taking place at Rome, though he doubtless anticipated that John de Grey would be chosen; he appears to have extracted a promise from the monks that they would elect no one else. John's submission, the outcome of his fear of treason at home, does not seem to have " thrilled England with a sense of national shame." There was nothing unusual in the acceptance of feudal overlordship; Richard I. had become the vassal of the Emperor Henry VI., and various kings had become papal vassals. Walter of Coventry admits that some thought the submission ignominious, but gives as his personal opinion the view that it was statesmanlike.

There is some doubt as to whether the council of St. Paul's at which Langton is said to have shown the barons the charter of Henry I. ever occurred; see Ramsay, " Angevin Empire."

Section III.—The Great Charter, 1215—1217

[*Authorities.*—The text of the Charter is printed in Stubbs, " Select Charters." McKechnie, " Magna Carta," supplies the best commentary upon it. Views unfavourable to the barons are to be found in Petit-Dutaillis, " Etude sur la vie et le règne de Louis VIII.," and Jenks, " The Myth of Magna Carta " (" Independent Review," March 1904)].

An island in the Thames between Staines and Windsor had been chosen as the place of conference: the King encamped on one bank, while the barons covered the marshy flat, still known by the name of Runnymede, on the other. Their delegates met in the island between them, but the negotiations were a mere cloak to cover John's purpose of unconditional submission. The Great Charter was discussed, agreed to, and signed in a single day. 1215 *June* 15

One copy of it still remains in the British Museum, injured by age and fire, but with the royal seal still hanging from the brown, shrivelled parchment. It is impossible to gaze without reverence on the earliest monument of English freedom which we can see with our own eyes and touch with our own hands, the great Charter to which from age to age patriots have looked back as the basis of English liberty. But in itself the Charter was no novelty, nor did it claim to establish any new constitutional principles. The Charter of Henry the First formed the basis of the whole, and the additions to it are for the most part formal recognitions of the judicial and administrative changes introduced by Henry the Second. But the vague expressions of the older charters were now exchanged for precise and elaborate provisions. The bonds of unwritten custom which the older grants did little more than recognize had proved too weak to hold the Angevins; and the baronage now threw them

1215 to 1217

aside for the restraints of written law. It is in this way that the Great Charter marks the transition from the age of traditional rights, preserved in the nation's memory and officially declared by the Primate, to the age of written legislation, of parliaments and statutes, which was soon to come. The Church had shown its power of self-defence in the struggle over the interdict, and the clause which recognized its rights alone retained the older and general form. But all vagueness ceases when the Charter passes on to deal with the rights of Englishmen at large, their right to justice, to security of person and property, to good government. "No freeman," ran the memorable article that lies at the base of our whole judicial system, "shall be seized or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or in any way brought to ruin: we will not go against any man nor send against him, save by legal judgment of his peers or by the law of the land." "To no man will we sell," runs another, "or deny, or delay, right or justice." The great reforms of the past reigns were now formally recognized; judges of assize were to hold their circuits four times in the year, and the Court of Common Pleas was no longer to follow the King in his wanderings over the realm, but to sit in a fixed place. But the denial of justice under John was a small danger compared with the lawless exactions both of himself and his predecessor. Richard had increased the amount of the scutage which Henry II. had introduced, and applied it to raise funds for his ransom. He had restored the Danegeld, or land tax, so often abolished, under the new name of "carucage," had seized the wool of the Cistercians and the plate of the churches, and rated moveables as well as land. John had again raised the rate of scutage, and imposed aids, fines, and ransoms at his pleasure without counsel of the baronage. The Great Charter met this abuse by the provision on which our constitutional system rests. With the exception of the three customary feudal aids which still remained to the crown, "no scutage or aid shall be imposed in our realm save by the common council of the realm"; and to this Great Council it was provided that prelates and the greater barons should be summoned by special writ, and all tenants in chief through the sheriffs and bailiffs, at least forty days before. A number of irregular exactions were abolished or assessed at a fixed rate, the abuses of wardship were reformed, and widows protected against the compulsory marriages to which they had been subjected to the profit of the crown.

The Charter and the People

The rights which the barons claimed for themselves they claimed for the nation at large. The boon of free and unbought justice was a boon for all, but a special provision protected the right of the poor. The forfeiture of the freeman on conviction of felony was never to include his tenement, or that of the merchant his wares, or that of the countryman his wain. The means of actual livelihood were to be left even to the worst. The under-tenants or farmers were protected against all lawless exactions of their lords in precisely the same terms as these were protected against the

lawless exactions of the crown. The towns were secured in the enjoyment of their municipal privileges, their freedom from arbitrary taxation, their rights of justice, of common deliberation, of regulation of trade. "Let the city of London have all its old liberties and its free customs, as well by land as by water. Besides this, we will and grant that all other cities, and boroughs, and towns, and ports, have all their liberties and free customs." The influence of the trading class is seen in two other enactments, by which freedom of journeying and trade was secured to foreign merchants, and an uniformity of weights and measures was ordered to be enforced throughout the realm. There remained only one question, and that the most difficult of all; the question how to secure this order which the Charter had established in the actual government of the realm. The immediate abuses were easily swept away, the hostages restored to their homes, the foreigners banished from the country. But it was less easy to provide means for the control of a King whom no man could trust, and a council of twenty-four barons were chosen from the general body of their order to enforce on John the observance of the Charter, with the right of declaring war on the King should its provisions be infringed. Finally, the Charter was published throughout the whole country, and sworn to at every hundred-mote and town-mote by order from the King. 1215 to 1217

"They have given me four-and-twenty over-kings," cried John in a burst of fury, flinging himself on the floor and gnawing sticks and straw in his impotent rage. But the rage soon passed into the subtle policy of which he was a master. Some days after he rode from Windsor, and he lingered for months along the Southern shore, the Cinque Ports and the Isle of Wight, waiting for news of the aid he had solicited from Rome and from the Continent. It was not without definite purpose that he had become the vassal of Rome. While Innocent was dreaming of a vast Christian Empire, with the Pope at its head, to enforce justice and religion on his under-kings, John believed that the Papal protection would enable him to rule as tyrannically as he would. The thunders of the Papacy were to be ever at hand for his protection, as the armies of England are at hand to protect the vileness and oppression of a Turkish Sultan or a Nizam of Hyderabad. His envoys were already at Rome, and Innocent, wroth both at the revolt against his vassal and the disregard of his own position as over-lord, annulled the Great Charter and suspended Stephen Langton from the exercise of his office as Primate. Autumn brought a host of foreign soldiers from over sea to the King's standard, and advancing against the disorganized forces of the barons, John starved Rochester into submission and marched ravaging through the midland counties to the North, while his mercenaries spread like locusts over the whole face of the land. From Berwick the King turned back triumphant to coop up his enemies in London, where fresh Papal excommunications fell on the barons and the city. But the John and the Charter

1215 to 1217

burghers set Innocent at defiance. "The ordering of secular matters appertaineth not to the Pope," they said, in words that seem like mutterings of the coming Lollardism; and at the advice of Simon Langton, the Archbishop's brother, bells swung out and mass was celebrated as before. With the undisciplined militia of the country and the towns, however, success was impossible against the trained forces of the King, and despair drove the barons to seek aid from France. Philip had long been waiting the opportunity for his revenge upon John, and his son Lewis at once accepted the crown in spite of Innocent's excommunications, and landed in Thanet with a considerable force. As the barons had foreseen, the French mercenaries who constituted John's host refused to fight against the French sovereign. The whole aspect of affairs was suddenly reversed. Deserted by the bulk of his troops, the King was forced to fall rapidly back on the Welsh Marches, while his rival entered London and received the submission of the larger part of England. Only Dover, under Hubert de Burgh, held out obstinately against Lewis, and John, who by a series of rapid marches had succeeded in distracting the plans of the barons, and relieving Lincoln, now turned southward to rescue the great fortress of the coast. In crossing the Wash, however, his army was surprised by the tide, and his baggage, with the royal treasures, washed away.

The Earl Mareschal

The fever which seized the baffled tyrant in the Abbey of Swineshead was inflamed by a gluttonous debauch, and John entered Newark only to die. His death changed the whole face of affairs, for his son Henry was but a child of ten years old, and the royal authority passed into the hands of one who was to stand high among English patriots, William, the Earl Mareschal. The coronation of the boy-king was at once followed by the solemn acceptance of the Great Charter, and the nobles soon streamed away from the French camp; for national jealousy and suspicions of treason told heavily against Lewis, while the pity which was excited by the youth and helplessness of Henry was aided by a sense of injustice in burthening the child with the iniquity of his father. One bold stroke of the Earl Mareschal decided the struggle. A joint army of Frenchmen and English barons, under the Count of Perche and Robert Fitz-Walter, were besieging Lincoln, when the Earl, suddenly gathering forces from the royal castles, marched to its relief. Cooped up in the steep narrow streets, and attacked at once by the Earl and the garrison, the French fled in hopeless rout; the Count of Perche fell on the field; Robert Fitz-Walter was taken prisoner. A more terrible defeat crushed the remaining hopes of Lewis. Large reinforcements set sail from France to his aid, under the escort of Eustace the Monk, a well-known free-booter of the Channel, but in the midst of their voyage a small English fleet, which had set sail from Dover under Hubert de Burgh, fell boldly on their rear. The fight admirably illustrates the naval warfare of the time. From the decks of the English vessels

Fair of Lincoln 1217

the bowmen of Philip d'Aubeny poured their arrows into the crowded masses on board the transports, others hurled quicklime into their enemies' faces, while the more active vessels crashed with their armed prows into the sides of the French ships. The skill of the mariners of the Cinque Ports decided the day against the larger forces of their opponents, and the fleet of Eustace was utterly destroyed. Earl Mareschal now closed in upon London, but resistance was really at an end. By the treaty of Lambeth, Lewis promised to withdraw from England on payment of a sum which he claimed as debt; his adherents were restored to their possessions, the liberties of London and other towns confirmed, and the prisoners on either side restored to liberty. The noble spirit of Earl Mareschal was shown in the wisdom and moderation of the terms of submission, and the expulsion of the stranger left England beneath the rule of a statesman whose love for the Charter was as great as its own. 1215 to 1217

Green is inaccurate in stating that the clauses restricting the royal revenue, omitted in the reissue of the Charter in 1216, were restored in that of 1217, which, on the contrary, was a charter calculated to serve baronial rather than national interests; see Davis, "England under the Normans and Angevins." It is also rather an exaggeration to suggest that the doctrine that redress of grievances should precede supply was established in this reign.

Section IV.—The Universities

[*Authorities.*—Rashdall, "The Universities of the Middle Ages," is the best general authority. For Roger Bacon, see his "Opera Quædam Inedita," edited by Brewer (Rolls Series); the "Opus Majus," edited Bridges.]

From the turmoil of civil politics we turn to the more silent but hardly less important revolution from which we may date our national education. It is in the reign of Henry the Third that the English universities begin to exercise a definite influence on the intellectual life of Englishmen. Of the early history of Cambridge we know little or nothing, but enough remains to enable us to trace the early steps by which Oxford attained to its intellectual eminence. The establishment of the great schools which bore the name of Universities was everywhere throughout Europe the special mark of the new impulse that Christendom had gained from the Crusades. A new fervour of study sprang up in the West from its contact with the more civilized East. Travellers like Adelard of Bath brought back the first rudiments of physical and mathematical science from the schools of Cordova or Bagdad. The earliest classical revival restored Cæsar and Virgil to the list of monastic studies, and left its stamp on the pedantic style, the profuse classical quotations of writers like William of Malmesbury or John of Salisbury. The scholastic philosophy sprung up in the

schools of Paris. The Roman law was revived by the imperialist doctors of Bologna. The long mental inactivity of feudal Europe was broken up like ice before a summer's sun. Wandering teachers like Lanfranc or Anselm crossed sea and land to spread the new power of knowledge. The same spirit of restlessness, of inquiry, of impatience with the older traditions of mankind, either local or intellectual, that had hurried half Christendom to the tomb of its Lord, crowded the roads with thousands of young scholars hurrying to the chosen seats where teachers were gathered together. A new power had sprung up in the midst of a world as yet under the rule of sheer brute force. Poor as they were, sometimes even of a servile race, the wandering scholars who lectured in every cloister were hailed as "masters" by the crowds at their feet. Abelard was a foe worthy of the menaces of councils, of the thunders of the Church. The teaching of a single Lombard was of note enough in England to draw down the prohibition of a King. When Vacarius, probably a guest in the court of Archbishop Theobald, where Beket and John of Salisbury were already busy with the study of the Civil Law, opened lectures on it at Oxford, he was at once silenced by Stephen, then at war with the Church, and jealous of the power which the wreck of the royal authority and the anarchy of his rule had already thrown into its hands.

Oxford

At the time of the arrival of Vacarius Oxford stood in the first rank among English towns. Its town church of S. Martin rose from the midst of a huddled group of houses, girt in with massive walls, that lay along the dry upper ground of a low peninsula between the streams of Cherwell and the upper Thames. The ground fell gently on either side, eastward and westward, to these rivers, while on the south a sharper descent led down across swampy meadows to the city bridge. Around lay a wild forest country, the moors of Cowley and Bullingdon fringing the course of Thames, the great woods of Shotover and Bagley closing the horizon to the south and east. Though the two huge towers of its Norman castle marked the strategic importance of Oxford as commanding the great river valley along which the commerce of Southern England mainly flowed, its walls formed, perhaps, the least element in its military strength, for on every side but the north the town was guarded by the swampy meadows along Cherwell, or by the intricate network of streams into which Isis breaks among the meadows of Osney. From the midst of these meadows rose a mitred abbey of Austin Canons, which, with the older priory of S. Frideswide, gave the town some ecclesiastical dignity. The residence of the Earl within its castle, the frequent visits of English kings to a palace without its walls, the presence again and again of important Parliaments, marked its political weight within the realm. The settlement of one of the wealthiest among the English Jewries in the very heart of the town indicated, while it promoted, the activity of its trade. Its burghers were proud of a liberty equal to that of London, while the close and peculiar alliance of the capital promised

the city a part almost equal to its own in the history of England. No city better illustrates the transformation of the land in the hands of its Norman masters, the sudden outburst of industrial effort, the sudden expansion of commerce and accumulation of wealth which followed the Conquest. To the west of the town rose one of the stateliest of English castles, and in the meadows beneath the hardly less stately abbey of Osney. In the fields to the north the last of the Norman kings raised his palace of Beaumont. The canons of S. Frideswide reared the church which still exists as the diocesan cathedral, while the piety of the Norman Castellans rebuilt almost all the parish churches of the city, and founded within their new castle walls the church of the Canons of S. George. We know nothing of the causes which drew students and teachers within the walls of Oxford. It is possible that here as elsewhere the new teacher had quickened older educational foundations, and that the cloisters of Osney and S. Frideswide already possessed schools which burst into a larger life under the impulse of Vacarius. As yet, however, the fortunes of the University were obscured by the glories of Paris. English scholars gathered in thousands round the chairs of William of Champeaux or Abelard. The English took their place as one of the "nations" of the French University. John of Salisbury became famous as one of the Parisian teachers. Beket wandered to Paris from his school at Merton. But through the peaceful reign of Henry the Second Oxford was quietly increasing in numbers and repute. Forty years after the visit of Vacarius, its educational position was fully established. When Gerald of Wales read his amusing Topography of Ireland to its students, the most learned and famous of the English clergy were, he tells us, to be found within its walls. At the opening of the thirteenth century Oxford was without a rival in its own country, while in European celebrity it took rank with the greatest schools of the Western world. But to realize this Oxford of the past we must dismiss from our minds all recollections of the Oxford of the present. In the outer aspect of the new University there was nothing of the pomp that overawes the freshman as he first paces the "High," or looks down from the gallery of S. Mary's. In the stead of long fronts of venerable colleges, of stately walks beneath immemorial elms, history plunges us into the mean and filthy lanes of a mediæval town. Thousands of boys, huddled in bare lodging-houses, clustering round teachers as poor as themselves in church porch and house porch, drinking, quarrelling, dicing, begging at the corners of the streets, take the place of the brightly-coloured train of doctors and Heads. Mayor and Chancellor struggle in vain to enforce order or peace on this seething mass of turbulent life. The retainers who follow their young lords to the University fight out the feuds of their houses in the streets. Scholars from Kent and scholars from Scotland wage the bitter struggle of North and South. At nightfall roysterer and reveller roam with torches through the narrow lanes, defying bailiffs, and

cutting down burghers at their doors. Now a mob of clerks plunges into the Jewry, and wipes off the memory of bills and bonds by sacking a Hebrew house or two. Now a tavern row between scholar and townsman widens into a general broil, and the academical bell of S. Mary's vies with the town bell of S. Martin's in clanging to arms. Every phase of ecclesiastical controversy or political strife is preluded by some fierce outbreak in this turbulent, surging mob. When England growls at the exactions of the Papacy, the students besiege a legate in the abbot's house at Osney. A murderous town and gown row precedes the opening of the Barons' War. "When Oxford draws knife," runs the old rhyme, "England's soon at strife."

Edmund Rich

But the turbulence and stir is a stir and turbulence of life. A keen thirst for knowledge, a passionate poetry of devotion, gathered thousands round the poorest scholar, and welcomed the barefoot friar. Edmund Rich—Archbishop of Canterbury and saint in later days—came, a boy of twelve years old, from the little lane at Abingdon that still bears his name. He found his school in an inn that belonged to the abbey of Eynsham, where his father had taken refuge from the world. His mother was a pious woman of his day, too poor to give her boy much outfit besides the hair shirt that he promised to wear every Wednesday; but Edmund was no poorer than his neighbours. He plunged at once into the nobler life of the place, its ardour for knowledge, its mystical piety. "Secretly," perhaps, at eventide when the shadows were gathering in the church of S. Mary's, and the crowd of teachers and students had left its aisles, the boy stood before an image of the Virgin, and placing a ring of gold upon its finger, took Mary for his bride. Years of study, broken by the fever that raged among the crowded, noisome streets, brought the time for completing his education at Paris, and Edmund, hand in hand with a brother Robert of his, begged his way, as poor scholars were wont, to the great school of Western Christendom. Here a damsel, heedless of his tonsure, wooed him so pertinaciously that Edmund consented at last to an assignation; but when he appeared it was in company of grave academical officials, who, as the maiden declared in the hour of penitence which followed, "straightway whipped the offending Eve out of her." Still true to his Virgin bridal, Edmund, on his return from Paris, became the most popular of Oxford teachers. It is to him that Oxford owes her first introduction to the Logic of Aristotle. We see him in the little room which he hired, with the Virgin's chapel hard by, his grey gown reaching to his feet, ascetic in his devotion, falling asleep in lecture time after a sleepless night of prayer, with a grace and cheerfulness of manner which told of his French training, and a chivalrous love of knowledge that let his pupils pay what they would. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," the young tutor would say, a touch of scholarly pride perhaps mingling with his contempt of worldly things, as he threw down the fee on the dusty window-ledge, where a thievish student would sometimes

run off with it. But even knowledge brought its troubles; the Old Testament, which with a copy of the Decretals long formed his sole library, frowned down upon a love of secular learning from which Edmund found it hard to wean himself. At last, in some hour of dream, the form of his dead mother floated into the room where the teacher stood among his mathematical diagrams. "What are these?" she seemed to say; and seizing Edmund's right hand, she drew on the palm three circles interlaced, each of which bore the name of one of the Persons of the Christian Trinity. "Be these," she cried, as her figure faded away, "thy diagrams henceforth, my son."

The Universities and Feudalism

The story admirably illustrates the real character of the new training, and the latent opposition between the spirit of the Universities and the spirit of the Church. The feudal and ecclesiastical order of the old mediæval world were both alike threatened by the power that had so strangely sprung up in the midst of them. Feudalism rested on local isolation, on the severance of kingdom from kingdom and barony from barony, on the distinction of blood and race, on the supremacy of material or brute force, on an allegiance determined by accidents of place and social position. The University, on the other hand, was a protest against this isolation of man from man. The smallest school was European, and not local. Not merely every province of France, but every people of Christendom, had its place among the "nations" of Paris or Padua. A common language, the Latin tongue, superseded within academical bounds the warring tongues of Europe. A common intellectual kinship and rivalry took the place of the petty strifes which parted province from province or realm from realm. What the Church and Empire had both aimed at and both failed in, the knitting of Christian nations together into a vast commonwealth, the Universities for a time actually did. Dante felt himself as little a stranger in the "Latin" quarter around Mont St. Genevieve as under the arches of Bologna. Wandering Oxford scholars carried the writings of Wyclif to the libraries of Prague. In England the work of provincial fusion was less difficult or important than elsewhere, but even in England work had to be done. The feuds of Northerner and Southerner which so long disturbed the discipline of Oxford witnessed at any rate to the fact that Northerner and Southerner had at last been brought face to face in its streets. And here as elsewhere, the spirit of natural isolation was held in check by the larger comprehensiveness of the University. After the dissensions that threatened the prosperity of Paris in the thirteenth century, Norman and Gascon mingled with Englishmen in Oxford lecture-halls. At a far later time the rebellion of Owen Glyndwyr found hundreds of Welsh scholars gathered round its teachers. And within this strangely mingled mass, society and government rested on a purely democratic basis. The son of the noble stood on precisely the same footing with the poorest mendicant among Oxford scholars. Wealth, physical

strength, skill in arms, pride of ancestry and blood, the very basis on which feudal society rested, went for nothing in Oxford lecture-rooms. The University was a state absolutely self-governed, and whose citizens were admitted by a purely intellectual franchise. Knowledge made the "master." To know more than one's fellows was a man's sole claim to be a "ruler" in the schools: and within this intellectual aristocracy all were equal. The free commonwealth of the masters gathered in the aisles of S. Mary's as the free commonwealth of Florence gathered in Santa Maria Novella. All had an equal right to counsel, all had an equal vote in the final decision. Treasury and library were at the complete disposal of the body of masters. It was their voice that named every officer, that proposed and sanctioned every statute. Even the Chancellor, their head, who had at first been an officer of the Bishop, became an elected officer of their own.

The Universities and the Church

If the democratic spirit of the Universities threatened feudalism, their spirit of intellectual inquiry threatened the Church. To all outer seeming they were purely ecclesiastical bodies. The wide extension which mediæval usage gave to the word "orders" gathered the whole educated world within the pale of the clergy. Whatever might be their age or proficiency, scholar and teacher were alike clerks, free from lay responsibilities or the control of civil tribunals, and amenable only to the rule of the Bishop and the sentence of his spiritual courts. This ecclesiastical character of the University appeared in that of its head. The Chancellor, as we have seen, was at first no officer of the University, but of the ecclesiastical body under whose shadow he had sprung into life. He was simply the local officer of the Bishop of Lincoln, within whose immense diocese the University was then situated. But this identification in outer form with the Church only rendered more conspicuous the difference of its spirit. The sudden expansion of the field of education diminished the importance of those purely ecclesiastical and theological studies which had hitherto absorbed the whole intellectual energies of mankind. The revival of classical literature, the rediscovery as it were of an older and a greater world, the contact with a larger, freer life, whether in mind, in society, or in politics, introduced a spirit of scepticism, of doubt, of denial into the realms of unquestioning belief. Abelard claimed for reason the supremacy over faith. The Florentine poets discussed with a smile the immortality of the soul. Even to Dante, while he censures these, Virgil is as sacred as Jeremiah. The imperial ruler in whom the new culture took its most notable form, Frederic the Second, the "World's Wonder" of his time, was regarded by half Europe as no better than an infidel. The faint revival of physical science, so long crushed as magic by the dominant ecclesiasticism, brought Christians into perilous contact with the Moslem and the Jew. The books of the Rabbis were no longer a mere accursed thing to Roger Bacon. The scholars of Cordova were no mere Paynim swine to Adelard of Bath. How

slowly and against what obstacles science won its way we know from the witness of Roger Bacon. "Slowly," he tells us, "has any portion of the philosophy of Aristotle come into use among the Latins. His Natural Philosophy and his Metaphysics, with the Commentaries of Averroes and others, were translated in my time, and interdicted at Paris up to the year A.D. 1237, because of their assertion of the eternity of the world and of time, and because of the book of the divinations by dreams (which is the third book, De Somniis et Vigiliis), and because of many passages erroneously translated. Even his logic was slowly received and lectured on. For S. Edmund, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was the first in my time who read the Elements at Oxford. And I have seen Master Hugo, who first read the book of Posterior Analytics, and I have seen his writing. So there were but few, considering the multitude of the Latins, who were of any account in the philosophy of Aristotle; nay, very few indeed, and scarcely any up to this year of grace 1292."

Roger Bacon 1214 to 1292

We shall see in a later page how fiercely the Church fought against this tide of opposition, and how it won back the allegiance of the Universities through the begging Friars. But it was in the ranks of the Friars themselves that the intellectual progress of the Universities found its highest representative. The life of Roger Bacon almost covers the thirteenth century; he was the child of royalist parents, who had been driven into exile and reduced to poverty by the civil wars. From Oxford, where he studied under Edmund of Abingdon, to whom he owed his introduction to the works of Aristotle, he passed to the University of Paris, where his whole heritage was spent in costly studies and experiments. "From my youth up," he writes, "I have laboured at the sciences and tongues. I have sought the friendship of all men among the Latins who had any reputation for knowledge. I have caused youths to be instructed in languages, geometry, arithmetic, the construction of tables and instruments, and many needful things besides." The difficulties in the way of such studies as he had resolved to pursue were immense. He was without instruments or means of experiment. "Without mathematical instruments no science can be mastered," he complains afterwards, "and these instruments are not to be found among the Latins, and could not be made for two or three hundred pounds. Besides, better tables are indispensably necessary, tables on which the motions of the heavens are certified from the beginning to the end of the world without daily labour, but these tables are worth a king's ransom, and could not be made without a vast expense. I have often attempted the composition of such tables, but could not finish them through failure of means and the folly of those whom I had to employ." Books were difficult and sometimes even impossible to procure. "The philosophical works of Aristotle, of Avicenna, of Seneca, of Cicero, and other ancients cannot be had without great cost; their principal works have not been translated into Latin, and copies of others are not

to be found in ordinary libraries or elsewhere. The admirable books of Cicero de Republica are not to be found anywhere, so far as I can hear, though I have made anxious inquiry for them in different parts of the world, and by various messengers. I could never find the works of Seneca, though I made diligent search for them during twenty years and more. And so it is with many more most useful books connected with the sciences of morals." It is only words like these of his own that bring home to us the keen thirst for knowledge, the patience, the energy of Roger Bacon. He returned as a teacher to Oxford, and a touching record of his devotion to those whom he taught remains in the story of John of London, a boy of fifteen, whose ability raised him above the general level of his pupils. "When he came to me as a poor boy," says Bacon, in recommending him to the Pope, "I caused him to be nurtured and instructed for the love of God, especially since for aptitude and innocence I have never found so towardly a youth. Five or six years ago I caused him to be taught in languages, mathematics, and optics, and I have gratuitously instructed him with my own lips since the time that I received your mandate. There is no one at Paris who knows so much of the root of philosophy, though he has not produced the branches, flowers, and fruit because of his youth, and because he has had no experience in teaching. But he has the means of surpassing all the Latins if he live to grow old and goes on as he has begun."

The pride with which he refers to his system of instruction was justified by the wide extension which he gave to scientific teaching in Oxford. It is probably of himself that he speaks when he tells us that "the science of optics has not hitherto been lectured on at Paris or elsewhere among the Latins, save twice at Oxford." It was a science on which he had laboured for ten years. But his teaching seems to have fallen on a barren soil. The whole temper of the age was against scientific or philosophical studies. The extension of freedom and commerce, even the diffusion of justice, were opening up practical channels for intellectual energy, more inviting because more immediately profitable than the path of abstract speculation. The older enthusiasm for knowledge was already dying down even at the Universities; the study of law was the one source of promotion, whether in Church or state; theology and philosophy were discredited, literature in its purer forms almost extinct. After forty years of incessant study, Bacon found himself in his own words "unheard, forgotten, buried." He seems at one time to have been wealthy, but his wealth was gone. "During the twenty years that I have specially laboured in the attainment of wisdom, abandoning the path of common men, I have spent on these pursuits more than two thousand pounds, on account of the cost of books, experiments, instruments, tables, the acquisition of languages, and the like. Add to all this the sacrifices I have made to procure the friendship of the wise, and to obtain well-instructed assistants." Ruined and baffled in his hopes, Bacon

listened to the counsels of his friend Grosseteste and renounced the world. He became a mendicant friar of the order of S. Francis, an order where books and study were looked upon as hindrances to the work which it had specially undertaken, that of preaching among the masses of the poor. He had written hardly anything. So far was he from attempting to write, that his new superiors had prohibited him from publishing anything under pain of forfeiture of the book and penance of bread and water. But we can see the craving of his mind, the passionate instinct of creation which marks the man of genius, in the joy with which he seized the strange opportunity which suddenly opened before him. "Some few chapters on different subjects, written at the entreaty of friends," seem to have got abroad, and were brought by one of his chaplains under the notice of Clement the Fourth. The Pope at once invited him to write. Again difficulties stood in his way. Materials, transcription, and other expenses for such a work as he projected, would cost at least £60, and the Pope had not sent a penny. He begged help from his family, but they were ruined like himself. No one would lend to a mendicant friar, and when his friends raised the money it was by pawning their goods in the hope of repayment from Clement. Nor was this all; the work itself, abstruse and scientific as was its subject, had to be treated in a clear and popular form to gain the Papal ear. But difficulties which would have crushed another man only roused Roger Bacon to an almost superhuman energy. In little more than a year, the 1267
Annus Mirabilis of English science, the work was done. The "greater work," itself in modern form a closely printed folio, with its successive summaries and appendices in the "lesser" and the "third" works (which make a good octavo more) were produced and forwarded to the Pope within fifteen months.

No trace of this fiery haste remains in the book itself. The "Opus Majus" is alike wonderful in plan and detail. Bacon's main plan, in the words of Dr. Whewell, is "to urge the necessity of a reform in the mode of philosophizing, to set forth the reasons why knowledge had not made a greater progress, to draw back attention to sources of knowledge which had been unwisely neglected, to discover other sources which were yet wholly unknown, and to animate men to the undertaking by a prospect of the vast advantages which it offered." The development of his scheme is on the largest scale; he gathers together the whole knowledge of his time on every branch of science which it possessed, and as he passes them in review he suggests improvements in nearly all. His labours, both here and in his after works, in the field of grammar and philology, his perseverance in insisting on the necessity of correct texts, of an accurate knowledge of languages, of an exact interpretation, are hardly less remarkable than his scientific investigations. But from grammar he passes to mathematics, from mathematics to experimental philosophy. Under the name of mathematics was included all the physical science of the time. "The neglect of it

The Opus Majus

for nearly thirty or forty years," pleads Bacon passionately, "hath nearly destroyed the entire studies of Latin Christendom. For he who knows not mathematics cannot know any other sciences; and what is more, he cannot discover his own ignorance or find its proper remedies." Geography, chronology, arithmetic, music, are brought into something of scientific form, and the same rapid examination is devoted to the question of climate, to hydrography, geography, and astrology. The subject of optics, his own especial study, is treated with greater fulness; he enters into the question of the anatomy of the eye, besides discussing the problems which lie more strictly within the province of optical science. In a word, the "Greater Work," to borrow the phrase of Dr. Whewell, is "at once the Encyclopædia and the Novum Organum of the thirteenth century." The whole of the after works of Roger Bacon—and treatise after treatise has of late been disentombed from our libraries—are but developments in detail of the magnificent conception he had laid before Clement. Such a work was its own great reward. From the world around Roger Bacon could look for, and found, small recognition. No word of acknowledgment seems to have reached its author from the Pope. If we may credit a more recent story, his writings only gained him a prison from his order. "Unheard, forgotten, buried," the old man died as he had lived, and it has been reserved for later ages to roll away the obscurity that had gathered round his memory, and to place first in the great roll of modern science the name of Roger Bacon.

Section V.—Henry the Third, 1216—1257

[*Authorities.*—Roger of Wendover, and his continuator, Matthew Paris (Rolls Series), are the main sources. Ralph of Coggeshall is important until 1227, and the "Chronique de l'Anonyme de Béthune" (Recueil des Historiens de France) may also be mentioned. The "Annales Monastici" (Rolls Series) are often useful. The various Rolls, Patent, Close, Charter, etc., are important for the whole period after the date since which they are extant (*circa* 1200 onwards). Among modern writers, Gasquet, "Henry III. and the Church," may be added.]

Hubert de Burgh

The death of the Earl Mareschal left the direction of affairs in the hands of Hubert de Burgh. It was an age of transition, and the temper of the new Justiciary was eminently transitional. Bred in the school of Henry the Second, he had little sympathy with the Charter or national freedom; his conception of good government, like that of his master, lay in a wise personal administration, in the preservation of order and law; but he combined with this a thoroughly English desire for national independence, a hatred of foreigners, and a reluctance to waste English blood and treasure in Continental struggles. Able as he proved himself, his task was one of no common difficulty. He was hampered by the constant interference of Rome. A Papal legate resided at the English court,

and claimed a share in the administration of the realm as the representative of its over-lord and as the guardian of the young sovereign. A foreign party, too, was still established in the kingdom, and the Court remained eager to plunge into foreign wars for the recovery of its lost domains. But it was with the general anarchy that Hubert had first to deal. From the time of the Conquest the centre of England had been covered with the domains of great houses, whose longings were for feudal independence, and whose spirit of revolt had been held in check, partly by the stern rule of the Kings, and partly by their creation of a baronage sprung from the Court and settled for the most part in the North, the "new men" of Henry the First and Henry the Second. The oppression of John united both the older and the newer houses in the struggle for the Charter, but the character of each remained unchanged, and the close of the struggle saw the feudal party break out in their old lawlessness and defiance of the Crown. For a time the anarchy of Stephen's days seemed revived. But the royal power was still great, and it was backed by the strenuous efforts of Stephen Langton. The Earl of Chester, the head of the feudal baronage, who had risen in armed rebellion, quailed before the march of Hubert and the Primate's threats of excommunication. A more formidable foe remained in the Frenchman, Faukes de Breauté, the sheriff of six counties, with six royal castles in his hands, and allied both with the rebel barons and Llewelyn of Wales. His castle of Bedford was besieged for two months before its surrender, and the stern justice of Stephen Langton hung the twenty-four knights and their retainers who formed the garrison before its walls while the lay lords, who would have spared them, were gone to dinner. The blow was effectual; the royal castles were surrendered by the barons, and the land was once more at peace. The services which Stephen Langton rendered to public order were small compared with his services to English freedom. Throughout his life the Charter was the first object of his care. The omission of the articles which restricted the royal power over taxation, without the assent of the great Council, in the Charter which was published at Henry's coronation, was doubtless due to the Archbishop's absence and disgrace at Rome, for his return is marked by a second issue, in which the omission is remedied, while a separate Charter of the Forest was added. No man, for the time to come, was to lose life or limb for taking the royal venison, and the recent extensions of the royal forest were roughly curtailed. The suppression of disorder seems to have revived the older spirit of resistance among the royal ministers; when Langton demanded a fresh confirmation of the Charter in Parliament at London, William Brewer, one of the King's counsellors, protested that it had been extorted by force, and was without legal validity. "If you loved the King, William," the Primate burst out in anger, "you would not throw a stumbling in the way of the peace of the realm." The King was cowed by the Archbishop's wrath, and at

1217 to 1257

1224

Langton and the Charter

1216

1218

1223

1217 to 1257 — 1224 once promised the observance of the Charter. Two years after, its solemn promulgation was demanded by the Archbishop and the barons as the price of a new subsidy, and the great principle that redress of wrongs precedes a grant to the Crown was established as a part of our constitution.

Hubert's fall — *Langton's death* 1228

The death of Stephen Langton left Hubert alone in the administration of the kingdom, for the Archbishop had extorted from the Pope the withdrawal of the resident Legate. But every year found the Justiciary at greater variance with Rome and with the temper of the King. In the mediæval theory of the Papacy, the constitution of the Church took the purely feudal form of the secular kingdoms around it, with the Pope for sovereign, bishops for his barons, the clergy for his under vassals. As the King demanded aids and subsidies in case of need from his liege men, so it was believed might the head of the Church from the priesthood. During the ministry of Hubert, the Papacy, exhausted by the long struggle with Frederic the Second, grew more and more extortionate in its demands, till the death of Langton saw them culminate in a demand of a tenth from the whole realm of England. The demand was at once rejected by the baronage, but a threat of excommunication silenced the murmurs of the clergy. Exaction followed exaction, the very rights of the lay patrons were set aside, and presentations to benefices (under the name of "reserves") were sold in the papal market, while Italian clergy were quartered on the best livings of the Church. The general indignation found vent at last in a wide conspiracy; letters from "the whole body of those who prefer to die rather than be ruined by the Romans" were scattered over the kingdom by armed men, the tithes gathered for the Pope and foreign clergy were seized and given to the poor, the papal commissioners beaten, and their bulls trodden under foot. The remonstrances of Rome only revealed the national character of the movement; but as inquiry proceeded, the hand of the minister himself was seen to have been at work. Sheriffs had stood idly by while the violence was done; royal letters had been exhibited by the rioters, and the Pope openly laid the charge of the outbreak on the secret connivance of Hubert de Burgh. The charge came at a time when his purely insular policy had alienated Henry himself from a minister to whom the King attributed the failure of his attempts to regain the foreign dominions of his house. An invitation from the barons of Normandy had been rejected through Hubert's remonstrances, and when a great armament gathered at Portsmouth for a campaign in Poitou, it was dispersed for want of transport or supplies. The young King drew his sword and rushed madly on the Justiciary, whom he charged with treason and corruption by the gold of France, but the influence of Hubert again succeeded in deferring the expedition. The failure of the campaign in the following year, when Henry took the field in Brittany and Poitou, was again laid at the door of the Justiciary, whose opposition had prevented an engagement, and the intrigues

1229 — 1231 — 1230

of Rome were hardly wanting to procure his fall. He was dragged from a chapel at Brentwood, where he had taken refuge, and a smith was ordered to shackle him. "I will die any death," replied the smith, "before I put iron on the man who freed England from the stranger and saved Dover from France." On the remonstrance of the Bishop of London Hubert was replaced in sanctuary, but hunger compelled him to surrender; he was thrown a prisoner into the Tower, and England was left to the rule of royal favourites and to the weakness and caprice of Henry himself. 1217 to 1257 1232

There was a certain refinement in Henry's temper which won him affection even in the worst days of his rule. The abbey church of Westminster, with which he replaced the ruder minster of the Confessor, remains a monument of his artistic taste. He was a patron and friend of artists and men of letters, and himself skilled in the "gay science" of the troubadour. From the cruelty, the lust, the impiety of his father he was absolutely free. But he was utterly devoid of the political capacity which had been the characteristic of John, as of his race. His conception of power lay in the display of an empty and profuse magnificence. Frivolous, changeable, impulsive alike in good and evil, false from sheer meanness of spirit, childishly superstitious, we can trace but one strong political drift in Henry's mind, a longing to recover the Continental dominions of his predecessors, to surround himself, like them, with foreigners, and without any express break with the Charter to imitate the foreign character of their rule. The death of Langton, the fall of Hubert de Burgh, enabled him to indulge his preference for aliens, and hordes of hungry Poitevins and Bretons were at once summoned over to occupy the royal castles and fill the judicial and administrative posts about the Court. His marriage with Eleanor of Provence was followed by the arrival in England of the Queen's uncles: one was enriched by the grant of Richmondshire; the Savoy palace in the Strand still recalls the magnificence of a second, Peter of Savoy, who was raised for a time to the chief place in council; Boniface, a third, was promoted to the highest post in the realm save the crown itself, the Archbishopric of Canterbury. The young Primate, like his brother, brought with him foreign fashions strange enough to English folk. His armed retainers pillaged the markets. His own archiepiscopal fist felled to the ground the prior of S. Bartholomew-by-Smithfield, who opposed his visitation. London was roused by the outrage, and on the King's refusal to do justice a noisy crowd of citizens surrounded the Primate's house at Lambeth with cries of vengeance. The "handsome archbishop," as his followers styled him, was glad to escape over sea; but the brood of Provençals was soon followed by the arrival of the Poitevin relatives of John's queen, Isabella of Angoulême. Aymer was made Bishop of Winchester; William of Valence received the earldom of Pembroke. Even the King's jester was a Poitevin. Hundreds of their dependants followed these great lords to find a fortune in the English realm. Peter of

Henry III. and the aliens

1236

1217 to 1257 Savoy brought in his train a bevy of ladies in search of husbands, and three English earls who were in royal wardship were wedded by the king to foreigners. The whole machinery of administration passed into the hands of men ignorant and contemptuous of the principles of English government or English law. Their rule was a mere anarchy; the very retainers of the royal household turned robbers, and pillaged foreign merchants in the precincts of the Court; corruption invaded the judicature; Henry de Bath, a justiciary, was proved to have openly taken bribes and to have adjudged to himself disputed estates. Meanwhile the royal treasure was squandered in a frivolous attempt to wrest Poitou from the 1242 grasp of France. The attempt ended in failure and shame. At Taillebourg the forces under Henry fled in disgraceful rout before the French as far as Saintes, and only the sudden illness of Lewis the Ninth and a disease which scattered his army, saved Bourdeaux from the conquerors.

The Barons and the Church That misgovernment of this kind should have gone on for twenty years unchecked, in defiance of the provisions of the Charter, was owing to the disunion and sluggishness of the English baronage. On the first arrival of the foreigners, Richard, the third Earl Mareschal, had stood forth as their leader to demand the expulsion of the strangers from the royal council, and though deserted by the bulk of the nobles, he had defeated the foreign forces sent against him, released Hubert de Burgh, and forced the King to treat for peace. 1234 At this critical moment, however, the Earl fell in an Irish skirmish, and the barons were left without a head. In the long interval of misrule which followed, the financial straits of the King forced him to heap exaction on exaction. The Forest Laws were used as a means of extortion, sees and abbeys were kept vacant, loans were wrested from lords and prelates, the Court itself lived at free quarters wherever it moved. Supplies of this kind, however, were utterly insufficient to defray the cost of the King's prodigality. A sixth of the royal revenue was wasted in pensions to foreign favourites. The debts of the Crown mounted to four times its annual income. Henry was forced to appeal for aid to the great 1237 Council of the realm, and aid was granted on condition that the King confirmed the Charter. The Charter was confirmed and steadily disregarded; and the resentment of the barons expressed 1242 itself in a determined protest and a refusal of further subsidies. In a few years Henry's necessities drove him to a new appeal, and the growing resolution of the nobles to enforce good govern- 1248 ment was seen in their offer of a grant on condition that the chief officers of the Crown were appointed by the great Council. Henry indignantly refused the offer, and sold his plate to the merchants of London. From the Church he encountered as resolute an opposition. The resistance of the Earl Mareschal had been vigorously backed by Edmund Rich, whom we have seen as an Oxford teacher, and who had risen to the Archbishopric of Canterbury. The threats and remonstrances of the Primate

had forced the King to an accommodation with the Earl, when his death dashed all hope of reform to the ground. But the policy of John made it easy to bridle the Church by the intervention of the Papacy, and at Henry's request a nuncio now appeared in the realm. The scourge of Papal taxation fell again on the clergy. After vain appeals to Rome and to the King, Archbishop Edmund retired to an exile of despair at Pontigny, and tax-gatherer after tax-gatherer, with powers of excommunication, suspension from orders, and presentation to benefices, descended on the unhappy priesthood. The wholesale pillage kindled a wide spirit of resistance. Oxford gave the signal by hunting the Papal legate, Otho, out of the city, amid cries of "usurer" and "simoniac" from the mob of students. Fulk Fitz-Warenne, in the name of the barons, bade Martin, a Papal collector, begone out of England. "If you tarry three days longer," he added, "you and your company shall be cut to pieces." For a time Henry himself was swept away by the tide of national indignation. Letters from the King, the nobles, and the prelates, protested against the Papal exactions, and orders were given that no money should be exported from the realm. But the threat of interdict soon drove Henry back on a policy of spoliation, in which he went hand in hand with Rome. 1217 to 1257 1246

The story of this period of misrule has been preserved for us by an annalist whose pages glow with the new outburst of patriotic feeling which this common oppression of the people and the clergy had produced. Matthew Paris is the greatest, as he is in reality the last, of our monastic historians. The school of S. Albans survived indeed till a far later time, but the writers dwindle into mere annalists whose view is bounded by the abbey precincts, and whose work is as colourless as it is jejune. In Matthew the breadth and precision of the narrative, the copiousness of his information on topics whether national or European, the general fairness and justice of his comments, are only surpassed by the patriotic fire and enthusiasm of the whole. He had succeeded Roger of Wendover as chronicler at S. Albans; and the Greater Chronicle with the abridgment of it which has long passed under the name of Matthew of Westminster, a "History of the English," and the "Lives of the Earlier Abbots," were only a few among the voluminous works which attested his prodigious industry. He was an eminent artist as well as an historian, and many of the manuscripts which are preserved are illustrated by his own hand. A large circle of correspondents—bishops like Grosseteste, ministers like Hubert de Burgh, officials like Alexander de Swereford—furnished him with minute accounts of political and ecclesiastical proceedings. Pilgrims from the East and papal agents brought news of foreign events to his scriptorium at S. Albans. He had access to and quotes largely from state documents, charters, and exchequer rolls. The frequency of the royal visits to the abbey brought him a store of political intelligence, and Henry himself contributed to the great chronicle which has preserved with so terrible a faithfulness the Matthew Paris 1200 to 1259

memory of his weakness and misgovernment. On one solemn feast-day the king recognized Matthew, and, bidding him sit on the middle step between the floor and the throne, begged him to write the story of the day's proceedings. While on a visit to S. Albans he invited him to his table and chamber, and enumerated by name two hundred and fifty of the English baronies for his information. But all this royal patronage has left little mark on his work. "The case," as he says, "of historical writers is hard, for if they tell the truth they provoke men, and if they write what is false they offend God." With all the fulness of the school of court historians, such as Benedict or Hoveden, Matthew Paris combines an independence and patriotism which is strange to their pages. He denounces with the same unsparing energy the oppression of the Papacy and the King. His point of view is neither that of a courtier nor of a Churchman, but of an Englishman, and the new national tone of his chronicle is but an echo of the national sentiment which at last bound nobles and yeomen and Churchmen together into an English people.

Section VI.—The Friars

[*Authorities.*—The "Monumenta Franciscana" (edited Brewer, in the Rolls Series), and the letters of Grosseteste (Rolls Series), are the chief sources. Milman, "Latin Christianity," gives an account of the whole Friar movement.]

England and the Church

From the tedious record of misgovernment and political weakness which stretches over the forty years we have passed through, we turn with relief to the story of the Friars.

Never, as we have seen, had the priesthood wielded such boundless power over Christendom as in the days of Innocent the Third and his immediate successors. But its religious hold on the people was loosening day by day. The old reverence for the Papacy faded away before the universal resentment at its political ambition, its ruthless exactions, its lavish use of interdict and excommunication for purely secular ends, its degradation of the most sacred sentences into means of financial extortion. In Italy, the struggle between Rome and Frederick the Second had disclosed a spirit of scepticism which among the Epicurean poets of Florence denied the immortality of the soul, and attacked the very foundations of the faith itself. In Southern Gaul, Languedoc and Provence had embraced the heresy of the Albigenses, and thrown off all allegiance to the Papacy. Even in England, though there were no signs as yet of religious revolt, the indignation of the people against Rome, its ceaseless exactions and monstrous alliance with the tyranny of the Crown, broke out in murmurs which preluded the open defiance of the Lollards. "The Pope has no part in secular matters," had been the reply of London to the interdict of Honorius. When the resistance of an Archbishop of York to the Papal

demands was met by excommunication, "the people blessed him the more, the more the Pope cursed him." The noblest among English prelates, Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln, died at feud with the Roman Court; the noblest of English patriots, Earl Simon of Montfort, was soon to die beneath its ban. The same loss of spiritual power, the same severance from national feeling, was seen in the English Church itself. Plundered and humiliated as they were by Rome, the worldliness of the bishops, the oppression of their ecclesiastical courts, the disuse of preaching, the decline of the monastic orders into rich landowners, the non-residence and ignorance of the parish priests, robbed the clergy of all spiritual influence. The abuses of the time foiled even the energy of Grosseteste. His constitutions forbid the clergy to haunt taverns, to gamble, to share in drinking bouts, to mix in the riot and debauchery of the life of the baronage. But his prohibitions only witness to the prevalence of the evils they denounce. Bishops and deans were withdrawn from their ecclesiastical duties to act as ministers, judges, or ambassadors. Benefices were heaped in hundreds at a time on royal favourites, like John Mansel. The Popes thrust boys of twelve years old into the wealthiest English livings. Abbeys absorbed the tithes of parishes, and then served them by half-starved vicars. Exemptions purchased from Rome shielded the scandalous lives of canons and monks from all episcopal discipline.

The Friars

To bring the world back again within the pale of the Church was the aim of two religious orders which sprang suddenly to life at the opening of the thirteenth century. The zeal of the Spaniard Dominic was roused at the sight of the lordly prelates who sought by fire and sword to win the Albigensian heretics to the faith. "Zeal," he cried, "must be met by zeal, lowliness by lowliness, false sanctity by real sanctity, preaching lies by preaching truth." His fiery ardour and rigid orthodoxy were seconded by the mystical piety, the imaginative enthusiasm of Francis of Assisi. The life of Francis falls like a stream of tender light across the darkness of the time. In the frescoes of Giotto or the verse of Dante we see him take Poverty for his bride. He strips himself of all, he flings his very clothes at his father's feet, that he may be one with Nature and God. His passionate verse claims the moon for his sister and the sun for his brother, he calls on his brother the Wind, and his sister the Water. His last faint cry was a "Welcome, Sister Death!" Strangely as the two men differed from each other, their aim was the same, to convert the heathen, to extirpate heresy, to reconcile knowledge with orthodoxy, to carry the Gospel to the poor. The work was to be done by the entire reversal of the older monasticism, by seeking personal salvation in effort for the salvation of their fellow-men, by exchanging the solitary of the cloister for the preacher, the monk for the friar. To force the new "brethren" into entire dependence on those among whom they laboured the vow of Poverty was turned into a stern reality; the "Begging Friars" were to subsist on the alms of the poor, they

might possess neither money nor lands, the very houses in which they lived were to be held in trust for them by others. The tide of popular enthusiasm which welcomed their appearance swept before it the reluctance of Rome, the jealousy of the older orders, the opposition of the parochial priesthood. Thousands of brethren gathered in a few years round Francis and Dominic, and the begging preachers, clad in their coarse frock of serge, with the girdle of rope round their waist, wandered barefooted as missionaries over Asia, battled with heresy in Italy and Gaul, lectured in the Universities, and preached and toiled among the poor.

The Friars and the Towns

To the towns especially the coming of the Friars was a religious revolution. They had been left for the most part to the worst and most ignorant of the clergy, the mass-priest, whose sole subsistence lay in his fees. Burgher and artisan were left to spell out what religious instruction they might from the gorgeous ceremonies of the Church's ritual or the scriptural pictures and sculptures which were graven on the walls of its minsters. We can hardly wonder at the burst of enthusiasm which welcomed the itinerant preacher, whose fervid appeal, coarse wit, and familiar story brought religion into the fair and the market-place. The Black Friars of Dominic, the Grey Friars of Francis, were received with the same delight. As the older orders had chosen the country, the Friars chose the town. They had hardly landed at Dover before they made straight for London and Oxford. In their ignorance of the road the two first Grey Brothers lost their way in the woods between Oxford and Baldon, and, fearful of night and of the floods, turned aside to a grange of the monks of Abingdon. Their ragged clothes and foreign gestures, as they prayed for hospitality, led the porter to take them for jongleurs, the jesters and jugglers of the day, and the news of this break in the monotony of their lives brought prior, sacrist, and cellarer to the door to welcome them and witness their tricks. The disappointment was too much for the temper of the monks, and the brothers were kicked roughly from the gate to find their night's lodging under a tree. But the welcome of the townsmen made up everywhere for the ill-will and opposition of both clergy and monks. The work of the Friars was physical as well as moral. The rapid progress of population within the boroughs had outstripped the sanitary regulations of the Middle Ages, and fever or plague or the more terrible scourge of leprosy festered in the wretched hovels of the suburbs. It was to haunts such as these that Francis had pointed his disciples, and the Grey Brethren at once fixed themselves in the meanest and poorest quarters of each town. Their first work lay in the noisome lazar-houses; it was amongst the lepers that they commonly chose the site of their houses. At London they settled in the shambles of Newgate; at Oxford they made their way to the swampy ground between the walls and the streams of Thames. Huts of mud and timber, as mean as the huts around them, rose within the rough fence and ditch that bounded the Friary. The order of Francis

1221 to 1226

made a hard fight against the taste for sumptuous buildings and for greater personal comfort which characterized the time. "I did not enter into religion to build walls," protested an English provincial, when the brethren pressed for a larger house; and Albert of Pisa ordered a stone cloister, which the burgesses of Southampton had built for them, to be razed to the ground. "You need no little mountains to lift your heads to heaven," was his scornful reply to a claim for pillows. None but the sick went shod. An Oxford Friar found a pair of shoes one morning, and wore them at matins. At night he dreamt that robbers leapt on him in a dangerous pass between Gloucester and Oxford, with shouts of "Kill, kill!" "I am a friar," shrieked the terror-stricken brother. "You lie," was the instant answer, "for you go shod." The Friar lifted up his foot in disproof, but the shoe was there. In an agony of repentance he woke and flung the pair out of the window.

The Friars and the Universities

It was with less success that the order struggled against the passion for knowledge. Their vow of poverty, rigidly interpreted as it was by their founders, would have denied them the possession of books or materials for study. "I am your breviary, I am your breviary," Francis cried passionately to a novice who asked for a psalter. When the news of a great doctor's reception was brought to him at Paris, his countenance fell. "I am afraid, my son," he replied, "that such doctors will be the destruction of my vineyard. They are the true doctors who, with the meekness of wisdom, show forth good works for the edification of their neighbours." At a later time Roger Bacon, as we have seen, was suffered to possess neither ink, parchment, nor books; and only the Pope's injunctions could dispense with the stringent observance of the rule. But while the work of the Friars among the sick and lepers drew them, as we have seen in Bacon's life, to the cultivation of the physical sciences, the popularity of their preaching soon led them to the deeper study of theology. Within a short time after their establishment in England we find as many as thirty readers or lecturers appointed at Hereford, Leicester, Bristol, and other places, and a regular succession of teachers provided at each University. The Oxford Dominicans lectured on theology in the nave of their new church, while philosophy was taught in the cloister. The first provincial of the Grey Friars built a school in their Oxford house, and persuaded Grosteste to lecture there. His influence after his promotion to the see of Lincoln was steadily exerted to secure study among the Friars, and their establishment in the University. He was ably seconded by his scholar, Adam Marsh, or de Marisco, under whom the Franciscan school at Oxford attained a reputation throughout Christendom. Lyons, Paris, and Cologne borrowed from it their professors: it was owing, indeed, to its influence that Oxford now rose to a position hardly inferior to that of Paris itself. The three most profound and original of the schoolmen—Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Ockham—were among its scholars; and they were followed by a crowd of teachers hardly less illustrious

in their day, such as Bungay, Burley, and Archbishop Peckham. Theology, which had been almost superseded by the more lucrative studies of the Canon Law, resumed its old supremacy in the schools; while Aristotle—who, as we have seen in the life of Bacon, had been so long held at bay as the most dangerous foe of the mediæval faith—was now turned by the adoption of his logical method into its unexpected ally. It was this very method that led to that "unprofitable subtlety and curiosity" which Lord Bacon notes as the vice of the scholastic philosophy. But "certain it is"—to continue the same great thinker's comment on the Friars—"that if these schoolmen, to their great thirst of truth and unwearied travel of wit had joined variety of reading and contemplation, they had proved excellent lights to the great advancement of all learning and knowledge." What, amidst all their errors, they undoubtedly did, was to substitute the appeal to reason for the mere unquestioning obedience to authority, to insist on the necessity of rigid demonstration and an exacter use of words, and to introduce a clear and methodical treatment of all subjects into discussion.

It is to the new clearness and precision which they gave to scientific inquiry, as well as to the strong popular sympathies which their very constitution necessitated, that we must attribute the influence which the Friars undoubtedly exerted on the coming struggle between the people and the Crown. Their position throughout the whole contest is strongly and clearly marked. The University of Oxford, which had now fallen under the direction of their teaching, stood first in its resistance to Papal exactions and its claim of English liberty. The classes in the towns on whom the influence of the Friars told most directly are steady supporters of freedom throughout the Barons' war. Adam Marsh was the close friend and confidant both of Grosteste and Earl Simon of Montfort.

Section VII.—The Barons' War, 1258—1265

[*Authorities.*—The chronicles of the period become somewhat poor; Rishanger continues Matthew Paris (Rolls Series), and the various monastic chronicles, already mentioned, are of use. Wykes' Chronicle is of special interest for the Barons' War, as he represents the royalist point of view. The political songs of the period, especially the Song of Lewes (Camden Society), illustrate the feelings of the period. The civic chronicles begin at this time, and the "Liber de Antiquis Legibus" (Camden Society) is useful for London. For Simon de Montfort, see the biography by Prothero, or that by Bémont.]

Simon of Montfort

When a thunderstorm once forced the King, as he was rowing on the Thames, to take refuge at the palace of the Bishop of Durham, Earl Simon of Montfort, who was a guest of the prelate, met the royal barge with assurances that the storm was drifting away, and that there was nothing to fear. Henry's petulant wit broke out in his reply. "I fear thunder and lightning not a little, Lord Simon,"

said the King, "but I fear *you* more than all the thunder and lightning in the world." 1258 to 1265

The man whom Henry dreaded as the future champion of English freedom was himself a foreigner, the son of a Simon de Montfort whose name had become memorable for his ruthless crusade against the Albigensian heretics in Southern Gaul. Though fourth son of this crusader, Simon became possessor of the English earldom of Leicester, which had passed by marriage to his family, 1238 and a secret match with Eleanor, the King's sister and widow of the Earl Mareschal, raised him to kindred with the throne. The baronage, indignant at this sudden alliance with a stranger, rose in a revolt which failed only through the desertion of their head, Earl Richard of Cornwall; while the censures of the Church on Eleanor's breach of a vow of chastity, which she had made at her first husband's death, were hardly averted by a journey to Rome 1240 to 1241 and a year's crusade in Palestine. Simon returned to find the changeable King alienated from him and to be driven by a burst of royal passion from the realm, but he was soon restored to favour and appointed Governor of Gascony, where the stern justice of his 1248 rule earned the hatred of the disorderly baronage, and the heavy taxation which his enforcement of order made necessary estranged from him the burgesses of Bourdeaux. The complaints of the Gascons brought about an open breach with the King. To Earl Simon's offer of the surrender of his post if the money he had spent in the royal service were, as Henry had promised, repaid him, the King hotly retorted that he was bound by no promise to a false traitor. The Earl at once gave Henry the lie,—"Were he not King he should pay dearly for the insult," he said,—and returned to Gascony, to be soon superseded, and forced to seek shelter in France. The greatness of his reputation was shown in the offer which was made to him in his exile of the regency of France during the absence of S. Lewis at the Crusade. On his refusal he was suffered to return to England and re-enter the royal service. His character had now thoroughly developed. He had inherited the 1253 strict and severe piety of his father; he was assiduous in his attendance on religious services, whether by night or day; he was the friend of Grosteste and the patron of the Friars. In his correspondence with Adam Marsh we see him finding patience under his Gascon troubles in the perusal of the Book of Job. His life was pure and singularly temperate; he was noted for his scant indulgence in meat, drink, or sleep. Socially he was cheerful and pleasant in talk; but his natural temper was quick and fiery, his sense of honour keen, his speech rapid and trenchant. "You shall go or die," we find him replying to William of Valence, when he refused to obey the orders of the barons and quit the realm. But the one characteristic which overmastered all was what men at that time called his "constancy," the firm immoveable resolve which trampled even death under foot in its loyalty to the right. The motto which Edward the First chose as his device, "Keep

1258 to 1265

troth," was far truer as the device of Earl Simon. We see in the correspondence of Friar Adam with what a clear discernment of its difficulties both at home and abroad he "thought it unbecoming to decline the danger of so great an exploit" as the reduction of Gascony to peace and order; but once undertaken, he persevered in spite of the opposition of the baronage, the short-sightedness of the merchant class, the failure of all support or funds from England, and at last the King's desertion of his cause, till the work was done. There is the same steadiness of will and purpose in his patriotism. The letters of Marsh and Grosteste show how early he had learnt to sympathise with the bishop in his struggle for the reform of the Church and his resistance to Rome, and at the crisis of the contest he offers him his own support and that of his associates. He sends to Marsh a tract of Grosteste's on "the rule of a kingdom and of a tyranny," sealed with his own seal. He listens patiently to the advice of his friends on the subject of his household or his temper. "Better is a patient man," writes the honest Friar, "than a strong man, and he who can rule his own temper than he who storms a city." "What use is it to provide for the peace of your fellow-citizens and not guard the peace of your own household?" It was to secure "the peace of his fellow-citizens" that the Earl silently trained himself in the ten years that followed his return to England, and the fruit of his discipline was seen when the crisis came. While other men wavered and faltered and fell away, the enthusiastic love of the people gathered itself round the stern, grave soldier who "stood like a pillar," unshaken by promise or threat or fear of death, by the oath he had sworn.

The Provisions of Oxford

While Simon stood silently by, things went from bad to worse. The Pope still weighed heavily on the Church, and even excommunicated the Archbishop of York for resistance to his exactions. The barons were mutinous and defiant. "I will send reapers, and reap your fields for you," Henry had threatened Earl Bigod of Norfolk, when he refused him aid. "And I will send you back the heads of your reapers," retorted the Earl. Hampered by the French strife, the profusion of the court, and by the refusal of the baronage to grant supplies while grievances were unredressed, the Crown was penniless, yet new expenses were incurred by Henry's acceptance of a papal offer of the kingdom of Sicily in favour of his second son Edmund. Shame had fallen on the English arms, and Edward had been disastrously defeated on the Marches by Llewelyn of Wales. The tide of discontent, which was heightened by a grievous famine, burst its bounds when the King seized and sold corn which his brother, Richard of Cornwall, had sent from Germany to relieve the general distress; and the barons repaired in arms to a Great Council summoned at Oxford. The past half-century had shown both the strength and weakness of the Charter: its strength as a rallying-point for the baronage, and a definite assertion of rights which the King could be made to acknowledge;

its weakness in providing no means for the enforcement of its own stipulations. Henry had sworn again and again to observe the Charter, and his oath was no sooner taken than it was unscrupulously broken. The barons had secured the freedom of the realm; the secret of their long patience during the reign of Henry lay in the difficulty of securing its administration. It was this difficulty which Earl Simon was prepared to solve. With the Earl of Gloucester he now appeared at the head of the baronage, and demanded the appointment of a committee to draw up terms for the reformation of the state. Although half the committee consisted of royal ministers and favourites, it was impossible to resist the tide of popular feeling, and the new royal council named by it consisted wholly of adherents of the barons. In the Provisions of Oxford the Justiciary, Chancellor, and the guardians of the King's castles swore to act only with the advice and assent of this Royal Council. The two first great officers, with the Treasurer, were to give account of their proceedings to it at the end of the year. Annual sheriffs were to be appointed from among the chief tenants of the county, and no fees were to be exacted for the administration of justice in their court. Three parliaments were to assemble every year, whether summoned by the King or no. The "commonalty" was to "elect twelve honest men who shall come to the parliaments and other times when occasion shall be, when the King or his council shall send for them, to treat of the wants of the King and of his kingdom. And the commonalty shall hold as established that which these twelve shall do." A royal proclamation in the English tongue, the first in that tongue which has reached us, ordered the observance of these Provisions. Resistance came only from the foreign favourites, and an armed demonstration drove them in flight over sea. Gradually the Council drew to itself the whole royal power, and the policy of the administration was seen in its prohibitions against any further payments, secular or ecclesiastical, to Rome, in the negotiations conducted by Earl Simon with France, which finally ended in the absolute renunciation of Henry's title to his lost provinces, and in the peace which put an end to the incursions of the Welsh. Within, however, the measures of the barons were feeble and selfish. The further Provisions, published by them under popular pressure in the following year, showed that the majority of them aimed simply at the establishment of a governing aristocracy. All nobles and prelates were exempted from attendance at the sheriff's court, and inquiry was ordered to be made by what right and warranty men whose fathers were serfs passed themselves off for freemen. It was in vain that Earl Simon returned from his negotiations in France to press for more earnest measures of reform, or that Edward, ever watchful to seize the moment of dissension among the barons, openly supported him; Gloucester with the feudal party was only driven into close alliance with the King, and Henry, procuring a bill of absolution from the Pope, seized the Tower, and by public

1258 to 1265

Provisions of Oxford, July 1258

1259

1261

1258 to 1265 — proclamation ordered the counties to pay no obedience to the officers nominated by the barons.

The struggle with the Crown

Deserted as he was, the Earl of Leicester showed no sign of submission. Driven for the moment into exile, he returned to find the barons again irritated by Henry's measures of reaction, while the death of the Earl of Gloucester removed the greatest obstacle to effective reform. At the Parliament of London a civil war seemed imminent, but against the will of Earl Simon a compromise was agreed on, and the question of the Provisions was referred to the arbitration of King Lewis of France. Mutual distrust, however, prevented any real accommodation. The march of Edward with a royal army against Llewelyn of Wales was viewed by the barons as a prelude to hostilities against themselves; and Earl Simon at

1263 once swept the Marches and besieged Dover. His power was strengthened by the attitude of the towns. The new democratic spirit which we have witnessed in the Friars was now stirring the purely industrial classes to assert a share in the municipal administration, which had hitherto been confined to the wealthier members of the merchant guild, and at London and elsewhere a revolution which will be described at greater length hereafter had thrown the government of the city into the hands of the lower citizens. The "communes," as the new city governments were called, showed an enthusiastic devotion to Earl Simon and his cause. The Queen was stopped in her attempt to escape from the Tower by an angry mob, who drove her back with stones and foul words. When Henry attempted to surprise Leicester in his quarters in Southwark, the Londoners burst the gates which had been locked by the richer burghers against him, and rescued him by a welcome into the city. In spite of the taunts of the royalists, who accused him of seeking allies against the nobility in the common people, the popular enthusiasm gave a strength to Earl Simon which enabled him to withstand the severest blow which had yet been dealt to

Mise of Amiens, January 1264 his cause. In the Mise of Amiens, Lewis of France, who had accepted the task of arbitrating between the contending parties, gave his verdict wholly in favour of the King. The Provisions of Oxford were annulled, the appointment and removal of the great officers of state was vested wholly in the Crown, the aliens might be recalled at the royal will, the castles were to be surrendered into Henry's hands. The blow was a hard one, and the decision of Lewis was backed by the excommunications of Rome. Luckily the French award had reserved the rights of Englishmen to the liberties they had enjoyed before the Provisions of Oxford, and it was easy for Earl Simon to prove that the arbitrary power it gave to the Crown was as contrary to the Charter as to the Provisions themselves. London was the first to reject the decision; its citizens mustered at the call of the town-bell at Saint Paul's, seized the royal officials, and plundered the royal parks. But the royal army had already mustered in great force at the King's summons, and Leicester found himself deserted by baron after baron. Every day

brought news of ill. A detachment from Scotland joined Henry's forces, the younger De Montfort was taken prisoner in a sally, Northampton was captured, the King raised the siege of Rochester, and a rapid march of Earl Simon's only saved London itself from a surprise by Edward. Betrayed as he was, the Earl remained firm to the cause. He would fight to the end, he said, even were he and his sons left to fight alone. With an army reinforced by 15,000 Londoners, he marched to the relief of the Cinque Ports, which were now threatened by the King. Even on the march he was forsaken by many of the nobles who followed him. Halting at Flexing in Sussex, a few miles from Lewes, where the royal army was encamped, Earl Simon with the young Earl of Gloucester offered the King compensation for all damage if he would observe the Provisions. Henry's answer was one of defiance, and though numbers were against him the Earl resolved on battle. His skill as a soldier reversed the advantages of the ground; marching at dawn, he seized the heights above the town, and forced the royal army to an attack. His men, with white crosses on back and breast, knelt in prayer while the royal forces advanced. Edward was the first to open the fight; his furious charge broke the Londoners on Leicester's left, and in the bitterness of his hatred he pursued them for four miles, slaughtering three thousand men. He returned to find the battle lost. Crowded in the narrow space with a river in their rear, the royalist centre and left were crushed by Earl Simon; the Earl of Cornwall, now King of the Romans, who, as the mocking song of the victors ran, "makede him a castel of a mulne post" ("he weened that the mill-sails were mangonels" goes on the sarcastic verse), was made prisoner, and Henry himself captured. Edward cut his way into the Priory only to join in his father's surrender.

1258 to 1265

Battle of Lewes, May 14, 1264

The victory of Lewes placed Earl Simon at the head of the state. "Now England breathes in the hope of liberty," sang a poet of the time; "the English were despised like dogs, but now they have lifted up their head and their foes are vanquished." The song announces with almost legal precision the theory of the patriots. "He who would be in truth a king, he is a 'free king' indeed if he rightly rule himself and his realm. All things are lawful to him for the government of his kingdom, but nothing for its destruction. It is one thing to rule according to a king's duty, another to destroy a kingdom by resisting the law." "Let the community of the realm advise, and let it be known what the generality, to whom their own laws are best known, think on the matter. They who are ruled by the laws know those laws best, they who make daily trial of them are best acquainted with them; and since it is their own affairs which are at stake, they will take more care, and will act with an eye to their own peace." "It concerns the community to see what sort of men ought justly to be chosen for the weal of the realm." The constitutional restrictions on the royal authority, the right of the whole nation to deliberate and decide on its own

The fall of Earl Simon

1258 to 1265

affairs, and to have a voice in the selection of the administrators of government, had never been so clearly stated before. That these were the principles of the man in whose hands victory had placed the realm is plain from the steps he immediately took. By the scheme devised in a parliament which immediately followed the battle of Lewes, the supreme power was to reside in the King, assisted by a council nominated by the Earls of Leicester and Gloucester and the patriotic Bishop of Chichester. In December a new parliament was summoned to Westminster, but the weakness of the patriotic party among the baronage was shown in the fact that only twenty-three earls and barons could be found to sit beside the hundred and twenty ecclesiastics. It was probably the sense of his weakness that forced Earl Simon to summon not only knights of the shires but two citizens from every borough. The attendance of delegates from the towns had long been usual in the county courts when any matter respecting their interests was in question; but it was the writ issued by Earl Simon that first summoned the merchant and the trader to sit beside the knight of the shire, the baron, and the bishop in the parliament of the realm. The importance of the step is best realized when we remember the new democratic spirit which through the victory of the "commune" over the wealthier burgher class was now triumphant in the towns. But it is only this great event which enables us to understand the large and prescient nature of Earl Simon's designs. Hardly a few months had passed since the victory of Lewes, and already, when the burghers took their seats at Westminster, his government was tottering to its fall. Dangers from without the Earl had met with complete success; a general muster of the national forces on Barham Down had put an end to the projects of invasion entertained by the mercenaries whom the Queen had collected in Flanders; the threats of France had died away into negotiations; the Papal Legate had been forbidden to cross the Channel, and his bulls of excommunication had been flung into the sea. But the difficulties at home grew more formidable every day. The restraint put upon Henry and Edward jarred against the national feeling of loyalty, and estranged the great masses who always side with the weak. Small as the patriotic party among the barons had always been, it grew smaller as dissensions broke out over the spoils of victory. The Earl's justice and resolve to secure the public peace told heavily against him. John Giffard left him because he refused to allow him to exact ransom from a prisoner contrary to the agreement made after Lewes. The Earl of Gloucester, though enriched with the estates of the foreigners, resented Leicester's prohibition of a tournament, his naming the wardens of the royal castles by his own authority, and his holding Edward's fortresses on the Welsh marches by his own garrisons. Gloucester's later conduct proves the wisdom of Leicester's precautions. He was already in correspondence with the royal party, and on the escape of Edward from confinement he joined him

Summons of the Commons to Parliament

with the whole of his forces. The moment was a luckless one for Earl Simon, who had advanced along bad roads into South Wales to attack the fortresses of his rebel colleague. Marching rapidly along the Severn, Edward took Gloucester, destroyed the ships by which Leicester hoped to escape to Bristol, and cut him off altogether from England; then turning rapidly to the east, he surprised the younger Simon de Montfort, who was advancing to his father's relief, at Kenilworth, and cut his whole force to pieces. From the field of battle he again turned to meet Earl Simon himself, who had thrown his troops in boats across the Severn, and was hurrying to the junction with his son. Exhausted by a night march on Evesham, the Earl learnt the approach of the royal forces, and pushing his army to the front, rode to a hill to reconnoitre. His eye at once recognized in the orderly advance of his enemies the proof of his own experienced training. "By the arm of St. James," he cried, "they come on in wise fashion, but it was from me that they learnt it." A glance satisfied him of the hopelessness of the struggle. "Let us commend our souls to God," he said, to the little group around him, "for our bodies are the foe's." It was impossible, indeed, for a handful of horsemen with a host of half-armed Welshmen to resist the disciplined knighthood of the royal army. The Earl, therefore, bade Hugh Despencer and the rest of his comrades fly from the field. "If he died," was the noble answer, "they had no will to live." In two hours the butchery was over. The Welsh fled at the first onset like sheep, and were cut ruthlessly down in the cornfields and gardens where they sought refuge. The group around Simon fought desperately, falling one by one till the Earl was left alone. A lance-thrust brought his horse to the ground, but Simon still rejected the summons to yield, till a blow from behind felled him, mortally wounded, to the ground, and with a last cry of "It is God's grace" the soul of the great patriot passed away.

1258 to 1265

Battle of Evesham, August 3, 1265

Simon de Montfort was the third son of the conqueror of the Albigenses. He secured the earldom of Leicester by agreement with his elder brother. His marriage with Henry III.'s sister, Eleanor, was not exactly secret; it was celebrated by the king's chaplain and in the royal presence, but without the knowledge of the baronage.

CHAPTER IV

THE THREE EDWARDS, 1265—1360

Section I.—The Conquest of Wales, 1265—1284

[*Authorities.*—The chief authorities for the general history of Wales are the "Annales Cambriæ," to 1288, and the "Brut-y-Tywysogion," to 1278 (both in the Rolls Series). The "Itinerarium Cambriæ," of Giraldus Cambrensis (Rolls Series), gives a general description of Wales at a somewhat earlier date. Stephens, "Literature of the Kymry," supplies an account of Welsh poetry; the "Mabinogion" can be found in a translation by Lady Guest. The best modern account of the conquest is in Morris, "Welsh Wars of Edward I." To the authorities for English History of this period, may be added the Chronicles of Trivet (English Historical Society), and Walter of Hemingburgh (English Historical Society), the latter being of great value after 1272.]

The Welsh Literature

While literature and science after a brief outburst were crushed in England by the turmoil of the Barons' War, a poetic revival had brought into sharp contrast the social and intellectual condition of Wales.

To all outer seeming Wales had in the thirteenth century become utterly barbarous. Stripped of every vestige of the older Roman civilization by ages of bitter warfare, of civil strife, of estrangement from the general culture of Christendom, the unconquered Britons had sunk into a mass of savage herdsmen, clad in the skins and fed by the milk of the cattle they tended, faithless, greedy, and revengeful, retaining no higher political organization than that of the clan, broken by ruthless feuds, united only in battle or in raid against the stranger. But in the heart of the wild people there still lingered a spark of the poetic fire which had nerved it four hundred years before, through Aneurin and Llywarch Hen, to its struggle with the Saxon. At the hour of its lowest degradation the silence of Wales was suddenly broken by a crowd of singers. The new poetry of the twelfth century burst forth, not from one bard or another, but from the nation at large. "In every house," says a shrewd English observer of the time, "strangers who arrived in the morning were entertained till eventide with the talk of maidens and the music of the harp." The new enthusiasm of the race found an admirable means of utterance in its tongue, as real a development of the old Celtic language heard by Cæsar as the Romance tongues are developments of Cæsar's Latin, but which at a far earlier date than any other language of modern Europe had attained to definite structure and to settled literary form. No other mediæval literature shows at its outset the same elaborate and completed organization as that of the Welsh, but

within these settled forms the Celtic fancy plays with a startling freedom. In one of the later poems Gwion the Little transforms himself into a hare, a fish, a bird, a grain of wheat; but he is only the symbol of the strange shapes in which the Celtic fancy embodies itself in the tales or Mabinogion which reached their highest perfection in the legends of Arthur. Its gay extravagance flings defiance to all fact, tradition, probability, and revels in the impossible and unreal. When Arthur sails into the unknown world, it is in a ship of glass. The "descent into hell," as a Celtic poet paints it, shakes off the mediæval horror with the mediæval reverence, and the knight who achieves the quest spends his years of infernal durance in hunting and minstrelsy, and in converse with fair women. The world of the Mabinogion is a world of pure phantasy, a new earth of marvels and enchantments, of dark forests whose silence is broken by the hermit's bell, and sunny glades where the light plays on the hero's armour. Each figure as it moves across the poet's canvas is bright with glancing colour. "The maiden was clothed in a robe of flame-coloured silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold in which were precious emeralds and rubies. Her head was of brighter gold than the flower of the broom, her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the falcon, was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan, her cheek was redder than the reddest roses." Everywhere there is an Oriental profusion of gorgeous imagery, but the gorgeousness is seldom oppressive. The sensibility of the Celtic temper, so quick to perceive beauty, so eager in its thirst for life, its emotions, its adventures, its sorrows, its joys, is tempered by a passionate melancholy that expresses its revolt against the impossible, by an instinct of what is noble, by a sentiment that discovers the weird charm of nature. Some graceful play of pure fancy, some tender note of feeling, some magical touch of beauty, relieves its worst extravagance. Kalweh's greyhounds, as they bound from side to side of their master's steed, "sport round him like two sea-swallows." His spear is "swifter than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth when the dew of June is at the heaviest." A subtle, observant love of nature and natural beauty takes fresh colour from the passionate human sentiment with which it is imbued, sentiment which breaks out in Gwalchmai's cry of nature-love, "I love the birds and their sweet voices in the lulling songs of the wood," in his watches at night besides the fords "among the untrodden grass" to hear the nightingale and watch the play of the sea-mew. Even patriotism takes the same picturesque form; the poet hates the flat and sluggish land of the Saxon; as he loves his own, he tells of "its sea-coast and its mountains, its towns on the forest border, its fair landscape, its dales, its waters, and its valleys, its white sea-mews,

1255 to 1284

1265 to 1284

its beauteous women." But the song passes swiftly and subtly into a world of romantic sentiment: "I love its fields clothed with tender trefoil, I love the marches of Merioneth where my head was pillowed on a snow-white arm." In the Celtic love of woman there is little of the Teutonic depth and earnestness, but in its stead a childlike spirit of delicate enjoyment, a faint distant flush of passion like the rose-light of dawn on a snowy mountain peak, a playful delight in beauty. "White is my love as the apple blossom, as the ocean's spray; her face shines like the pearly dew on Eryri; the glow of her cheeks is like the light of sunset." But the buoyant and elastic temper of the French trouveur is spiritualized in the Welsh singers by a more refined poetic feeling. "Whoso beheld her was filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod." The touch of pure fancy removes its object out of the sphere of passion into one of delight and reverence.

It is strange, as we have said, to pass from the world of actual Welsh history into such a world as this. But side by side with this wayward, fanciful stream of poesy and romance ran a torrent of intenser song. The old spirit of the earlier bards, their joy in battle, the love for freedom, their hatred of the Saxon, broke out in ode after ode, turgid, extravagant, monotonous, often prosaic, but fused into poetry by the intense fire of patriotism which glowed within it. The rise of the new poetic feeling indeed marked the appearance of a new energy in the long struggle with the English conqueror.

England and the Welsh

Of the three Welsh states into which all that remained unconquered of Britain had been broken by the victories of Deorham and Chester, two had already ceased to exist. The country between the Clyde and the Dee, which soon became parted into the kingdoms of Cumbria and Strathclyde, had been gradually absorbed by the conquest of Northumbria. West Wales, between the British Channel and the estuary of the Severn, had yielded at last to the sword of Æthelstan. But a fiercer resistance prolonged the independence of the great central portion which alone in modern language preserves the name of Wales. In itself the largest and most powerful of the British kingdoms, it was aided in its struggle against Mercia by the weakness of its assailant, the youngest and least powerful of the English states, as well as by the internal warfare which distracted the energies of the invaders. But Mercia had no sooner risen to supremacy among the English kingdoms, than it took the conquest vigorously in hand. Offa tore from Wales the border land between the Severn and the Wye; the raids of his successors carried fire and sword into the heart of the country; and an acknowledgment of the Mercian over-lordship was wrested from the Welsh princes. On the fall of Mercia this passed to the West-Saxon kings. The Laws of Howel Dha own the payment of a yearly tribute by "the prince of Aberfrau" to "the king of London," and three Welsh chieftains were among the subject

feudatories who rowed Eadgar on the Dee. The weakness of England during her long struggle with the Danes revived the hopes of British independence, and in the midst of the Confessor's reign the Welsh seized on a quarrel between the houses of Leofric and Godwine to cross the border and carry their attacks into England itself. The victories of Harold, however, re-asserted the English supremacy; his light-armed troops disembarking on the coast penetrated to the heart of the mountains, and the successors of the Welsh prince Gruffydd, whose head was the trophy of the campaign, swore to observe the old fealty and render the old tribute to the English Crown. 1265 to 1284 1053

The Conquest of South Wales

A far more desperate struggle began when the wave of Norman conquest broke on the Welsh frontier. A chain of great earldoms, settled by William along the border land, at once bridled the old marauding forays. From his county palatine of Chester, Hugh the Wolf harried Flintshire into a desert; Robert of Belesme, in his earldom of Shrewsbury, "slew the Welsh," says a chronicler, "like sheep, conquered them, enslaved them, and flayed them with nails of iron." Backed by these greater baronies a horde of lesser adventurers obtained the royal "licence to make conquest on the Welsh." Monmouth and Abergavenny were seized and guarded by Norman castellans; Bernard of Neufmarché won the lordship of Brecknock; Roger of Montgomery raised the town and fortress in Powysland which still preserves his name.

1094

A great rising of the whole people at last recovered some of this Norman spoil. The new castle of Montgomery was burnt, Brecknock and Cardigan were cleared of the invaders, and the Welsh poured ravaging over the English border. Twice the Red King carried his arms fruitlessly among the mountains, against enemies who took refuge in their fastnesses till famine and hardship had driven his broken host into retreat. The wiser policy of Henry the First fell back on his father's system of gradual conquest, and a new tide of invasion flowed along the coast, where the land was level and open and accessible from the sea. Robert Fitz-Hamo, the Lord of Gloucester, had already been summoned to his aid by a Welsh chieftain; and by the defeat of Rhys ap Tewdor, the last prince under whom Southern Wales was united, had produced an anarchy which enabled him to land safely on the coast, to sweep the Welsh from Glamorgan, and divide it between his soldiery. A force of Flammands and Englishmen followed Richard Strongbow as he landed near Milford Haven, and pushing back the inhabitants settled a "Little England" in the present Pembrokeshire. Traces of the Flemish speech still linger perhaps in the peninsula of Gower, where a colony of mercenaries from Flanders settled themselves at a somewhat later time, while a few daring adventurers followed the Lord of Keymes into Cardiganshire, where land might be had for the asking by any who would "wage war upon the Welsh."

The Lords of Snowdon

It was at this moment, when the utter subjugation of the British race seemed close at hand, that the new poetic fire rolled back

1265 to 1284

the tide of invasion, and changed these fitful outbreaks of Welsh resistance into a resolute effort to regain national independence. Every fight, every hero, had suddenly its verse. The names of the older bards were revived in bold forgeries to animate the national resistance and to prophesy victory. It was in North Wales that the new spirit of patriotism received its strongest inspiration from this burst of song. Again and again Henry the Second was driven to retreat from the impregnable fastnesses where the "Lords of Snowdon," the princes of the house of Gruffydd ab Conan, claimed supremacy over Wales. Once a cry arose that the King was slain, Henry of Essex flung down the royal standard, and the King's desperate efforts could hardly save his army from utter rout. In a later campaign the invaders were met by storms of rain, and forced to abandon their baggage in a headlong flight to Chester. The greatest of the Welsh odes, that known to English readers in Gray's translation as "The Triumph of Owen," is Gwalchmai's song of victory over the repulse of an English fleet from Abermenai.

1195 to 1283

The long reigns of the two Llewelyns, the sons of Jorwerth and of Gruffydd, which all but cover the last century of Welsh independence, seemed destined to realize the hopes of their countrymen. The homage which the first succeeded in extorting from the whole of the Welsh chieftains placed him openly at the head of his race, and gave a new character to his struggle with the English King. In consolidating his authority within his own domains, and in the assertion of his lordship over the princes of the south, Llewelyn ap Jorwerth aimed steadily at securing the means of striking off the yoke of the Saxon. It was in vain that John strove to buy his friendship by the hand of his daughter Johanna. Fresh raids on the Marches forced the King to enter Wales; but though his army reached Snowdon, it fell back like its predecessors, starved

1211

and broken before an enemy it could never reach. A second attack had better success. The chieftains of South Wales were drawn from their new allegiance to join the English forces, and Llewelyn, prisoned in his fastnesses, was at last driven to submit. But the ink of the treaty was hardly dry before Wales was again on fire; the common fear of the English once more united its chieftains, and the war between John and his barons removed all dread of a new invasion. Absolved from his allegiance to an excommunicated King, and allied with the barons under Fitz-Walter—too glad to enlist in their cause a prince who could hold in check the nobles of the border country, where the royalist cause was strongest—Llewelyn seized his opportunity to reduce Shrewsbury, to annex Powys, where the English influence had always been powerful, to clear the royal garrisons from Caermarthen and Cardiganshire, and to force even the Flemings of Pembroke to do him homage.

Llewelyn ap Jorwerth and the Bards

The hopes of Wales rose higher and higher with each triumph of the Lord of Snowdon. The court of Llewelyn was crowded with bardic singers. "He pours," sings one of them, "his gold into the lap of the bard as the ripe fruit falls from the trees." But gold was

1265 to 1284

hardly needed to wake their enthusiasm. Poet after poet sang of "the Devastator of England," the "Eagle of men that loves not to lie nor sleep," "towering above the rest of men with his long red lance," his "red helmet of battle crested with a fierce wolf," "The sound of his coming is like the roar of the wave as it rushes to the shore, that can neither be stayed nor appeased." Lesser bards strung together his victories in rough jingle of rhyme, and hounded him on to the slaughter. "Be of good courage in the slaughter," sings Elidir, "cling to thy work, destroy England, and plunder its multitudes." A fierce thirst for blood runs through the abrupt, passionate verses of the court singers. "Swansea, that tranquil town, was broken in heaps," bursts out a triumphant poet; "St. Clears, with its bright white lands, it is not Saxons who hold it now!" "In Swansea, the key of Lloegria, we made widows of all the wives." "The dread Eagle is wont to lay corpses in rows, and to feast with the leader of wolves and with hovering ravens glutted with flesh, butchers with keen scent of carcases." "Better," closes the song, "is the grave than the life of man who sighs when the horns call him forth to the squares of battle." But even in bardic verse Llewelyn rises high out of the mere mob of chieftains who live by rapine, and boast as the Hirlas-horn passes from hand to hand through the hall that "they take and give no quarter." "Tender-hearted, wise, witty, ingenious," he was "the great Cæsar" who was to gather beneath his sway the broken fragments of the Celtic race. Mysterious prophecies floated from lip to lip, till the name of Merlin was heard along the Seine and the Rhine. Medrawd and Arthur would appear once more on earth to fight over again the fatal battle of Camlan. The last conqueror of the Celtic race, Cadwallon, still lived to combat for his people. The supposed verses of Taliesin expressed the undying hope of a restoration of the Cymry. "In their hands shall be all the land from Brittany to Man: . . . a rumour shall arise that the Germans are moving out of Britain back again to their fatherland." Gathered up in the strange work of Geoffry of Monmouth, these predictions made a deep impression, not on Wales only, but on its conquerors. It was to meet indeed the dreams of a yet living Arthur that the grave of the legendary hero-king at Glastonbury was found and visited by Henry the Second. But neither trick nor conquest could shake the firm faith of the Celt in the ultimate victory of his race. "Think you," said Henry to a Welsh chieftain who had joined his host, "that your people of rebels can withstand my army?" "My people," replied the chieftain, "may be weakened by your might, and even in great part destroyed, but unless the wrath of God be on the side of its foe it will not perish utterly. Nor deem I that other race or other tongue will answer for this corner of the world before the Judge of all at the last day save this people and tongue of Wales." So ran the popular rhythm, "Their Lord they will praise, their speech they shall keep, their land they shall lose—except wild Wales." Faith and prophecy seemed justified by the

1265 to 1284 growing strength of the British people. The weakness and dissensions which characterized the reign of Henry the Third enabled Llewelyn ap Jorwerth to preserve a practical independence till the close of his life, when a fresh acknowledgment of the English supremacy was wrested from him by Archbishop Edmund. But

Llewelyn ap Gruffyd 1246 to 1283 the triumphs of his arms were renewed by Llewelyn the son of Gruffyd, whose ravages swept the border to the very gates of Chester, while his fleet intercepted and routed the reinforcements which the English were drawing from Ireland. His conquest of Glamorgan roused the Welsh chieftains to swear eternal enmity against the English race, and throughout the Barons' war Llewelyn remained master of Wales. Even at its close the threat of an attack from the now united kingdom only forced him to submission on a

1268 practical acknowledgment of his sovereignty. The chieftain whom the English kings had till then scrupulously designated as "Lord of Snowdon," was now allowed the title of "Prince of Wales," and his right to receive homage from the other nobles of his principality was formally allowed.

The Conquest of Wales

Near, however, as Llewelyn seemed to the final realization of his aims, he was still a vassal of the English crown, and the accession of a new sovereign to the throne was at once followed by the demand of his homage. The youth of Edward the First had given little promise of the high qualities which distinguished him as an English ruler. In his earlier manhood he had won general ill-will by the turbulence and disorder of his knightly train; his intrigues in the earlier part of the Barons' war had aroused the suspicions of the King; his faithlessness in the later time had brought about the fatal conflict between the Crown and Earl Simon which ended in the Earl's terrible overthrow. London remembered bitterly his ruthless butchery of her citizens at Lewes, and the reckless pillage at the close of the war with which he avenged an insult offered to his mother. But with the victory of Evesham his character seemed to mould itself into nobler form. It was from Earl Simon, as the Earl owned with a proud bitterness ere his death, that Edward had learned the skill in warfare which distinguished him among the princes of his time. But he had learned from the Earl the far nobler lesson of a self-government which lifted him high above them as a ruler among men. Severing himself from the brutal triumph of the royalist party, he secured fair terms to the conquered, and after crushing the last traces of resistance, cleared the realm of the disorderly bands which the cessation of the war had

Death of Henry III. 1272 let loose on the country by leading them to a crusade in Palestine. His father's death recalled him home to meet at once the difficulty of Wales. During two years Llewelyn rejected the King's repeated summons to him to perform his homage, till Edward's patience was exhausted, and the royal army marched into North Wales. The

1277 fabric of Welsh greatness fell at a single blow; the chieftains of the south and centre who had so lately sworn fealty to Llewelyn deserted him to join his English enemies; a fleet from the Cinque

Ports reduced Anglesea, and the chief of Snowdon, cooped up in his fastnesses, was forced to throw himself on the royal mercy. With characteristic generosity, his conqueror contented himself with adding to the English dominions the country as far as Conway, and providing that the title of Prince of Wales should cease at Llewelyn's death. A heavy fine which he had incurred was remitted, and Eleanor the daughter of Simon of Montfort, who had been arrested on her way to join him as his wife, was wedded to him at the English court. For four years all was quiet, but a sudden outbreak of his brother David, who had deserted him in the previous war, and whose desertion had been rewarded with an English earldom, roused Llewelyn to a renewal of the struggle. A prophecy of Merlin had announced that when English money became round the Prince of Wales should be crowned at London, and a new coinage of copper money, coupled with the prohibition to break the silver penny into halves and quarters, as had been usual, was supposed to have fulfilled the prediction. In the campaign which followed the Prince held out in Snowdon with the stubbornness of despair, and the rout of an English detachment which had thrown a bridge across the Menai Straits from Anglesea prolonged the contest into the winter. Terrible, however, as were the sufferings of the English army, Edward's firmness remained unbroken, and rejecting all proposals of retreat he issued orders for the formation of a new army at Caermarthen to complete the circle of investment. The danger drew Llewelyn into Radnorshire, and the last Prince of Wales fell, unrecognized, in a petty skirmish on the banks of the Wye. With him expired the independence of his race. After six months of flight his brother David was arrested and sentenced in full Parliament to a traitor's death. The submission of the lesser chieftains was followed by the building of strong castles at Conway and Caernarvon and the settlement of English barons on the confiscated soil. A wiser instinct of government led Edward to establish trade-guilds in the towns, to introduce the English jurisprudence, to divide the country into shires and hundreds on the English model, and to abolish by the "Statute of Wales" the more barbarous of the Welsh customs. His policy of justice and conciliation (for the alleged "massacre of the bards" is a mere fable) accomplished its end, and with the exception of a single rising in Edward's reign the peace of Wales remained unbroken for a hundred years.

1265 to 1284

1282

Edward, by the Statute of Wales, issued from Rhuddlan, did not abolish the marcher lordships, and really did little more than organize the districts conquered from Llewelyn. The three shires of Anglesey, Carnarvon, and Merioneth were formed, and those of Cardigan and Carmarthen were reorganized; Flint was made a dependency of Chester. For the whole question, see Tout, "The Welsh Shires," in "Y. Cymmrodor" (ix. 201).

1283 to 1295

Section II.—The English Parliament, 1283—1295

[*Authorities.*—The principal writs, including those for the Parliament of 1275, are printed in Stubbs, "Select Charters" (edited Davis), where may also be found excerpts from the "Modus Tenendi Parliamenti." Stubbs, "Constitutional History," is the chief modern work on the growth of Parliament; cp. Maitland, "Constitutional History of England." The recent discovery of the writs for the Parliament of 1275 shows that the idea of a complete representation was present in Edward's mind at an earlier date than 1295, and that the importance of that body may perhaps be overestimated.]

The New England

The conquest of Wales marked the adoption of a new attitude and policy on the part of the Crown. From the earliest moment of his reign Edward the First definitely abandoned all dreams of recovering the foreign dominions of his race, to concentrate himself on the consolidation and good government of Britain itself. We can only fairly judge his annexation of Wales or his attempt to annex Scotland if we regard them as parts of the same scheme of national administration to which we owe his final establishment of our judicature, our legislation, our Parliament. The King's English policy, like his English name, are the signs of a new epoch. The long period of national formation has come practically to an end. With the reign of Edward begins modern England, the England in which we live. It is not that any chasm separates our history before it from our history after it, as the chasm of the Revolution divides the history of France, for we have traced the rudiments of our constitution to the first moment of the English settlement in Britain. But it is with these as with our language. The tongue of Ælfred is the very tongue we speak, but in spite of its actual identity with modern English it has to be learnt like the tongue of a stranger. On the other hand, the English of Chaucer is almost as intelligible as our own. In the first the historian and philologer can study the origin and development of our national speech, in the last a schoolboy can enjoy the story of Troilus and Cresside, or listen to the gay chit-chat of the Canterbury Tales. In precisely the same way the laws of Æthelstan or Stephen are indispensable for the right understanding of later legislation, its origin and its development, while the principles of our Parliamentary system must necessarily be studied in the Meetings of Wise Men before the Conquest or barons after it. But the Parliaments which Edward gathered at the close of his reign are not merely illustrative of the history of later Parliaments, they are absolutely identical with those which still sit at St. Stephen's; and a statute of Edward, if unrepealed, can be pleaded in our courts as formally as a statute of Victoria. In a word, the long struggle of the constitution for actual existence has come to an end. The contests which follow are not contests which tell, like those which preceded them, on the actual fabric of our political institutions; they are simply stages in the rough discipline by which England has learnt, and is still learning, how

best to use and how wisely to develop the latent powers of its national life, how to adjust the balance of its social and political forces, and to adapt its constitutional forms to the varying conditions of the time. From the reign of Edward, in fact, we are face to face with modern England. Kings, Lords, Commons, the courts of justice, the forms of public administration, our local divisions and provincial jurisdictions, the relations of Church and State, in great measure the framework of society itself, have all taken the shape which they still essentially retain. 1283 to 1295

Much of this great change is doubtless attributable to the general temper of the age, whose special task and object seemed to be that of reducing to distinct form the great principles which had sprung into a new and vigorous life during the century that preceded it. As the thirteenth century had been an age of founders, creators, discoverers, so its successor was an age of lawyers; the most illustrious men of the time were no longer such as Bacon, or Earl Simon, or Francis of Assisi, but men such as St. Lewis of France or Alfonso the Wise, organizers, administrators, framers of laws and institutions. It was to this class that Edward himself belonged. There is no trace of creative genius or originality in his character, but he possessed in a high degree the faculty of organization, and his passionate love of law broke out even in the legal chicanery to which he sometimes stooped. In the judicial reforms to which the earlier part of his reign was devoted we see, if not an "English Justinian," at any rate a clear-sighted man of business, developing, reforming, bringing into distinct shape the institutions of his predecessors. His first step was to define the provinces of the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions, by restricting the Bishops' Courts, or Courts Christian, to the cognizance of purely spiritual causes, and of causes like those of perjury, marriage, and testamentary dispositions, which were regarded as of a semi-spiritual nature. The most important court of civil jurisdiction, the Sheriffs' or County Court, remained unchanged, both in the extent of its jurisdiction, and the character of the Sheriff as a royal officer. But a change which told greatly on its powers sprang almost accidentally from the operation of a statute (that of Winchester) which provided for the peace of the realm. To enforce the observance of this act knights were appointed in every shire under the name of Conservators of the Peace, a name which, as the convenience of these local magistrates was more sensibly felt and their powers more largely extended, was changed for that which they still retain, of "Justices of the Peace." The superior courts into which the King's Court had since the great Charter divided itself—those of the King's Bench, Exchequer, and Common Pleas—assumed their present form partly by each receiving a distinct staff of judges, partly by the extinction of the office of the Justiciar, who had till then given them a seeming unity by acting as president in all. Of far greater importance than these changes, which were in fact but the completion of reforms begun long before, was the

Judicial reforms

Justices of the Peace 1285

The three Common Law Courts

1283 to 1295

establishment of an equitable jurisdiction side by side with that of the common law. In his reform of 1178 Henry the Second had broken up the older King's Court, which had till then served as the final Court of Appeal, by the severance of the purely legal judges who had been gradually added to it from the general body of his councillors. The judges thus severed from the Council retained the name and the ordinary jurisdiction of "the King's Court," while all cases in which they failed to do justice were reserved for the special cognizance of the Council itself. To this new final jurisdiction of the King in Council, Edward gave a wide development; his assembly of the ministers, the higher permanent officials, and the law officers of the Crown, reserved to itself in its judicial capacity the correction of all breaches of the law which the lower courts had failed to repress, whether from weakness, partiality, or corruption, and especially of those lawless outbreaks of the more powerful baronage which defied the common authority of the judges. Though regarded with jealousy by Parliament, the jurisdiction of the Council seems to have been steadily exercised through the two centuries which followed; in the reign of Henry the Seventh it took legal and statutory form in the new shape of the Court of Star Chamber, and its powers are still exercised in our own days by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. But at a far earlier date its jurisdiction as a Court of Appeal had given birth to that of the Chancellor. The separate powers of this great officer of State, who had originally acted only as President of the Council when discharging its judicial functions, seems to have been thoroughly established under Edward the First, and considerably extended during the reign of his successor. It is by remembering the origin of the Court of Chancery that we understand the nature of the powers it gradually acquired. All grievances of the subject, especially those which sprang from the misconduct of government officials or of powerful oppressors, fell within its cognizance, as they had fallen within that of the Royal Council, and to these were added disputes respecting the wardship of infants, dower, rent-charges, or tithes. Its equitable jurisdiction sprang from the defective nature and the technical and unbending rules of the common law. As the Council had given redress in cases where law became injustice, so the Court of Chancery interfered without regard to the rules of procedure adopted by the common law courts, on the petition of a party for whose grievance the common law provided no adequate remedy. An analogous extension of his powers enabled the Chancellor to afford relief in cases of fraud, accident, or abuse of trust, and this side of his jurisdiction was largely extended at a later time through the results of legislation on the tenure of land by ecclesiastical bodies.

The King in Council

The Court of Chancery

Edward's legislation

In legislation, as in his judicial reforms, Edward did little more than renew and consolidate the principles which had been already brought into practical working by Henry the Second. His Statute of Winchester followed the precedent of the "Assize of Arms" in

1285

basing the preservation of public order on the revival and development of the local system of frank-pledge. Every man was bound to hold himself in readiness, duly armed, for the King's service, or the hue and cry which pursued the felon. Every district was made responsible for crimes committed within its bounds; the gates of each town were required to be closed at nightfall, and all strangers to give an account of themselves to its magistrates. As a security for travellers against sudden attacks from robbers, all brushwood was to be destroyed for a space of two hundred feet on either side the public highway, a provision which illustrates at once the social and physical condition of the country at the time. The same care for the trading classes was seen in the Statute of Merchants, which provided for the registration of the debts of traders, and for their recovery by distraint of the debtor's goods and the imprisonment of his person. The Statute of Mortmain, which prohibited the alienation of lands to the Church under pain of forfeiture, was based on the Constitutions of Clarendon, but it is difficult to see in it more than a jealousy of the rapid growth of ecclesiastical estates, which, grudged as it was by the baronage, was probably beneficial to the country at large, as military service was rendered by Church fees as rigidly as by lay, while the churchmen were the better landlords. The statute, however, was soon evaded by the ingenuity of lawyers, but it probably checked a process which it could not wholly arrest. We trace the same conservative tendency, the same blind desire to keep things as they were during an age of rapid transition, in the great land-law which bears the technical name of the Statute "Quia Emptores." It is one of those legislative efforts which mark the progress of a wide social revolution in the country at large. The number of the greater barons was in fact diminishing every day, while the number of the country gentry and of the more substantial yeomanry was increasing with the increase of the national wealth. This increase showed itself in the growing desire to become proprietors of land. Tenants of the greater barons received under-tenants on condition of their rendering them similar services to those which they themselves rendered to their lords; and the baronage, while duly receiving the services in compensation for which they had originally granted their land in fee, saw with jealousy the feudal profits of these new under-tenants, the profits of wardship or of reliefs and the like, in a word the whole increase in the value of the estate consequent on its subdivision and higher cultivation, passing into other hands than their own. To check this growth of a squirearchy, as we should now term it, the statute provided that in any case of alienation the sub-tenant should henceforth hold, not of the tenant, but directly of the superior lord; but its result seems to have been to promote instead of hindering the subdivision of land. The tenant who was compelled before to retain in any case so much of the estate as enabled him to discharge his feudal services to the over-lord of whom he held it, was now enabled by a process analogous to the sale

1283 to 1295

1283

1279

1290

1283 to 1295

of "tenant-right," to transfer both land and services to new holders.

The Great Council of the Realm

It is to the same social revolution rather than to any political prescience of Edward the First, that we owe our Parliament. Neither the Meeting of the Wise Men before the Conquest, nor the Great Council of the Barons after it, had been in any way representative bodies. The first, which theoretically included all free holders of land, had shrunk at an early time—as we have seen—into a gathering of the earls, the higher nobles, and the bishops, with the officers and thegns of the royal household. Little change was made in the composition of this assembly by the Conquest, for the Great Council of the Norman kings was held to include all tenants who held directly of the Crown, the bishops and greater abbots (whose character as independent spiritual members tended more and more to merge in their position as barons), and the great officers of the Court. But though its composition remained the same, the character of the assembly was essentially altered. From a free gathering of "Wise Men" it sank to a Royal Court of feudal vassals; but though its functions seem to have become almost nominal, and its powers to have been restricted to the sanctioning, without debate or possibility of refusal, all grants demanded from it by the Crown, its "counsel and consent" remained necessary for the legal validity of every great fiscal or political measure, and thus protested effectually against the imperial theories advanced by the lawyers of Henry the Third, theories which declared all legislative power to reside wholly in the sovereign. It was in fact under Henry the Second that these assemblies became more regular, and their functions more important. The great reforms which marked his reign were issued in the Great Council, and even financial matters were suffered to be debated there. But it was not till the grant of the Great Charter that its powers over taxation were formally recognized, and the principle established that no burthen beyond the customary feudal aids might be imposed "save by the Common Council of the Realm." The same great document first expressly regulated its form. In theory, as we have seen, the assembly consisted of all who held land directly of the Crown. But the same causes which restricted attendance at the Witenagemot to the greater nobles, told on the actual composition of the Council of Barons. While the attendance of the ordinary tenants in chief, the Knights or "Lesser Barons," was burthensome from its expense to themselves, their numbers and their dependence on the higher nobles made it dangerous to the Crown. As early, therefore, as the time of Henry the First we find a distinction recognized between the "Greater Barons," of whom the Council was usually composed, and the "Lesser Barons" who formed the bulk of the tenants of the Crown; but though the attendance of the latter had become rare, their right of attendance remained intact. While enacting that the prelates and greater barons should be summoned by special writs to each gathering of the Council, a remarkable pro-

vision of the Great Charter orders a general summons to be issued through the Sheriff to all direct tenants of the Crown. The provision was probably intended to rouse the lesser baronage to the exercise of rights which had practically passed into desuetude, but as the clause is omitted in later issues of the Charter we may doubt whether the principle it embodied ever received more than a very limited application. There are traces of the attendance of a few of the lesser knighthood, gentry perhaps of the neighbourhood where the Assembly was held, in some of its meetings under Henry the Third, but till a late period in the reign of his successor the Great Council practically remained a gathering of the greater barons, the prelates, and the officers of the Crown. The change which the Great Charter had failed to accomplish was now, however, brought about by the social circumstances of the time. One of the most remarkable of these was the steady decrease in the number of the greater nobles. The bulk of the earldoms had already lapsed to the Crown through the extinction of the families of their possessors; of the greater baronies, many had practically ceased to exist by their division among female co-heiresses, many through the constant struggle of the poorer barons to rid themselves of their rank by a disclaimer, so as to escape the burthen of higher taxation and attendance in Parliament which it involved. How far this diminution had gone we may see from the fact that hardly more than a hundred barons sat in the earlier Councils of Edward's reign. But while the number of those who actually possessed the privilege of assisting in Parliament was rapidly diminishing, the numbers and wealth of the "lesser baronage," whose right of attendance had become a mere constitutional tradition, was as rapidly increasing. The long peace and prosperity of the realm, the extension of its commerce, and the increased export of wool, were swelling the ranks and incomes of the country gentry as well as of the freeholders and substantial yeomanry. We have already noticed the growing passion for the possession of land which makes this reign so critical a moment in the history of the English squirearchy; but the same tendency had to some extent existed in the preceding century, and it was a consciousness of the growing importance of this class of rural proprietors which induced the barons to make their fruitless attempt to induce them to take part in the deliberations of the Great Council. But while the barons desired their presence as an aid against the Crown, the Crown itself desired it as a means of rendering taxation more efficient. So long as the Great Council remained a mere assembly of magnates it was necessary for the King's ministers to treat separately with the other orders of the state as to the amount and assessment of their contributions. The grant made in the Great Council was binding only on the barons and prelates who made it; but before the aids of the boroughs, the Church, or the shires could reach the royal treasury, a separate negotiation had to be conducted by the officers of the Exchequer with the reeves of each town, the sheriff and shire-court of each

1283 to 1295

1283 to 1295

county, and the archdeacons of each diocese. Bargains of this sort would be the more tedious and disappointing as the necessities of the Crown increased in the later years of Edward, and it became a matter of fiscal expediency to obtain the sanction of any proposed taxation through the presence of these classes in the Great Council itself.

Knights of the shire

The effort, however, to revive the old personal attendance of the lesser baronage which had broken down half a century before, could hardly be renewed at a time when the increase of their numbers made it more impracticable than ever; but a means of escape from this difficulty was fortunately suggested by the very nature of the court through which alone a summons could be addressed to the landed knighthood. Amidst the many judicial reforms of Henry or Edward the Shire Court remained unchanged. The haunted mound or the immemorial oak round which the assembly gathered (for the court was often held in the open air) were the relics of a time before the free kingdom had sunk into a shire, and its Meetings of the Wise into a County Court. But save that the King's reeve had taken the place of the King, and that the Norman legislation had displaced the Bishop and set four Coroners by the Sheriff's side, the gathering of the freeholders remained much as of old. The local knighthood, the yeomanry, the husbandmen of the county, were all represented in the crowd that gathered round the Sheriff, as, guarded by his liveried followers, he published the King's writs, announced his demand of aids, received the presentment of criminals and the inquests of the local jurors, assessed the taxation of each district, or listened solemnly to appeals for justice, civil and criminal, from all who held themselves oppressed in the lesser courts of the hundred or the soke. It was in the County Court alone that the Sheriff could legally summon the lesser baronage to attend the Great Council, and it was in the actual constitution of this assembly that the Crown found a solution of the difficulty which we have already stated. For the principle of representation by which it was finally solved was coeval with the Shire Court itself. In all cases of civil or criminal justice the twelve sworn assessors of the Sheriff represented the judicial opinion of the county at large. From every hundred came groups of twelve sworn deputies, the "jurors," through whom the presentments of the district were made to the royal officer, and with whom the assessment of its share in the general taxation was arranged. The husbandmen on the outskirts of the crowd, clad in the brown smock frock which still lingers in the garb of our carters and ploughmen, were broken up into little knots of five, a reeve and four assistants, who formed the representatives of the rural townships. If, in fact, we regard the Shire Courts as lineally the descendants of our earliest English Parliaments, we may justly claim the principle of parliamentary representation as among the oldest of our institutions. But it was only slowly and tentatively that this principle was applied to the reconstitution of the Great

Council. As early as the close of John's reign there are indications of the approaching change in the summons of "four discreet knights" from every county. Fresh need of local support was felt by both parties in the conflict of the succeeding reign, and Henry and his barons alike summoned knights from each shire "to meet on the common business of the realm." It was no doubt with the same purpose that the writs of Earl Simon ordered the choice of knights in each shire for his famous parliament of 1265. Something like a continuous attendance may be dated from the accession of Edward, but it was long before the knights were regarded as more than local deputies for the assessment of taxation, or admitted to a share in the general business of the Great Council. The statute "Quia Emptores," for instance, was passed in it before the knights who had been summoned could attend. Their participation in the deliberative power of Parliament, as well as their regular and continuous attendance, dates only from the Parliament of 1295. But a far greater constitutional change in their position had already taken place through the extension of electoral rights to the freeholders at large. The one class entitled to a seat in the Great Council was, as we have seen, that of the lesser baronage, and of the lesser baronage alone the knights were in theory the representatives. But the necessity of holding their election in the County Court rendered any restriction of the electoral body physically impossible. The court was composed of the whole body of freeholders, and no sheriff could distinguish the "aye, aye" of the yeoman from the "aye, aye" of the squire. From the first moment, therefore, of their attendance we find the knights regarded not as mere representatives of the baronage, but Knights of the Shire, and by this silent revolution the whole body of the rural freeholders were admitted to a share in the government of the realm.

1283 to 1295

The financial difficulties of the Crown led to a far more radical revolution in the admission into the Great Council of representatives from the boroughs. The presence of Knights from each shire was, as we have seen, the recognition of an older right, but no right of attendance or share in the national "counsel and assent" could be pleaded for the burgesses of the towns. On the other hand, the rapid development of their wealth made them every day more important as elements in the national taxation. The towns had long since freed themselves from all payment of the dues or fines exacted by the King, as the original proprietor of the soil on which they had in most cases grown up, by what was called the purchase of the "farm of the borough"; in other words, by the commutation of those uncertain dues for a fixed sum paid annually to the Crown, and apportioned by their own magistrates among the general body of the burghers. All that the Crown legally retained was the right enjoyed by every great proprietor of levying a corresponding taxation on its tenants in demesne under the name of "a free aid," whenever a grant was made for the national

Representation of Boroughs

1281 to 1295 necessities by the barons of the Great Council. But the temptation of appropriating the growing wealth of the mercantile class proved stronger than legal restrictions, and we find both Henry the Third and his son assuming a right of imposing taxes at pleasure and without any authority from the Council even over London itself. The burgesses could refuse indeed the invitation to contribute to the "free aid" demanded by the royal officers, but the suspension of their markets or trading privileges soon brought them to submission. Each of these "free aids," however, had to be extorted after a long wrangle between the borough and the officers of the Exchequer; and if the towns were driven to comply with what they considered an extortion, they could generally force the Crown by evasions and delays to a compromise and abatement of its original demands. The same financial reasons, therefore, existed for desiring the presence of their representatives in the Great Council as existed in the case of the shires; but it was the genius of Earl Simon which first broke through the older constitutional tradition, and dared to summon two burgesses from each town to the Parliament of 1265. Time had, indeed, to pass before the large and statesmanlike conception of the great patriot could meet with full acceptance. Through the earlier part of Edward's reign we find a few instances of the presence of representatives from the towns, but their scanty numbers and the irregularity of their attendance show that they were summoned rather to afford financial information to the Great Council than as representatives in it of an Estate of the Realm. But every year pleaded stronger and stronger for the Earl's conception, and in the Parliament of 1295 that of 1265 found itself at last reproduced. "It was from me that he learnt it," Earl Simon had cried, as he recognized the military skill of Edward's onset at Evesham; "It was from me that he learnt it," his spirit might have exclaimed, as he saw the King gathering at last two burgesses "from every city, borough, and leading town" within his realm to sit side by side with the knights, nobles, and barons of the Great Council. To the Crown the change was from the first an advantageous one. The grants of subsidies by the burgesses in Parliament proved far more profitable than the previous extortions of the Exchequer. The proportion of their grant generally exceeded that of the other estates by a tenth. Their representatives too proved far more compliant with the royal will than the barons or knights of the shire; only on one occasion during Edward's reign did the burgesses waver from their general support of the Crown. It was easy indeed to control them, for the selection of boroughs to be represented remained wholly in the King's hands, and their numbers could be increased or diminished at the King's pleasure. The determination was left to the sheriff, and at a hint from the royal council a sheriff of Wilts would cut down the number of represented boroughs in his shire from eleven to three, or a sheriff of Bucks declare he could find but a single borough, that of Wycombe, within the bounds of the county. Nor

was this exercise of the prerogative hampered by any anxiety on the part of the towns to claim representative privileges. It was difficult to suspect that a power before which the Crown would have to bow lay in the ranks of soberly clad traders, summoned only to assess the contributions of their boroughs, and whose attendance was as difficult to secure as it seemed burthensome to themselves and the towns who sent them. The mass of citizens took little or no part in their choice, for they were elected in the county court by a few of the principal burghers deputed for the purpose; but the cost of their maintenance, the two shillings a day paid to the burgess by his town as four were paid to the knight by his county, was a burthen from which the boroughs made desperate efforts to escape. Some persisted in making no return to the sheriff till their names from sheer disuse dropped off the Parliament-roll. Some bought charters of exemption from the troublesome privilege. Of the 165 who were summoned by Edward the First, more than a third either took no notice of the writs whatever or ceased to do so after a single compliance with them. During the whole time from the reign of Edward the Third to the reign of Henry the Sixth the sheriff of Lancashire declined to return the names of any boroughs at all within that county, "on account of their poverty." Nor were the representatives themselves more anxious to appear than their boroughs to send them. The busy country squire and the thrifty trader were equally reluctant to undergo the trouble and expense of a journey to Westminster. Legal measures were often necessary to ensure their presence. Writs still exist in abundance such as that by which Walter le Rous is "held to bail in eight oxen and four cart-horses to come before the King on the day specified" for attendance in Parliament. But in spite of obstacles such as these the presence of representatives from the boroughs may be regarded as continuous from the Parliament of 1295. As the representation of the lesser barons had widened through a silent change into that of the shire, so that of the boroughs—restricted in theory to those in royal demesne—seems practically from Edward's time to have been extended to all who were in a condition to pay the cost of their representatives' support. By a change as silent within the Parliament itself we shall soon see the burgess, originally summoned to take part only in matters of taxation, admitted to a full share in the deliberations and authority of the other orders of the State.

1283 to 1295

The admission of the burgesses and knights of the shire to the assembly of 1295 completed the fabric of our representative constitution. The Great Council of the Barons had become the Parliament of the Realm, a parliament in which every order of the state found itself represented, and took part in the grant of supplies, the work of legislation, and the control of government. But though in all essential points the character of Parliament has remained the same from that time to this, there were some remarkable particulars in which this great assembly as it was left by Edward the

The early Parliaments

1283 to 1295

First differed widely from the present Parliament at St. Stephen's. Some of these differences, such as those which sprang from the increased powers and changed relations of the different orders among themselves, we shall have occasion to consider at a later time. But a difference of a far more startling kind than these lay in the presence of the clergy. If there is any part in the Parliamentary scheme of Edward the First which can be regarded as especially his own, it is his project for the representation of the ecclesiastical order. The King had twice at least summoned its "proctors" to Parliament before 1295, but it was then only that the complete representation of the Church was definitely organized by the insertion of a clause in the writ which summoned a bishop to Parliament requiring the personal attendance of all archdeacons, deans, or priors of cathedral churches, of a proctor for each cathedral chapter, and two for the clergy within his diocese. The clause is repeated in the writs of the present day, but its practical effect was foiled almost from the first by the resolute opposition of those to whom it was addressed. What the towns failed in doing the clergy actually did. Even when forced to comply with the royal summons, as they seem to have been forced during Edward's reign, they sat jealously by themselves, and their refusal to vote supplies in any but their own provincial assemblies, or convocations, of Canterbury and York, left the Crown without a motive for insisting on their continued attendance. Their presence, indeed, though still occasionally granted on some solemn occasions, became so pure a formality that by the end of the fifteenth century it had sunk wholly into desuetude. In their anxiety to preserve their existence as an isolated and privileged order, the clergy flung away a power which, had they retained it, would have ruinously hampered the healthy development of the state. To take a single instance, it is difficult to see how the great changes of the Reformation could have been brought about had a good half of the House of Commons consisted purely of Churchmen, whose numbers would have been backed by the weight of property as possessors of a third of the landed estates of the realm. A hardly less important difference may be found in the gradual restriction of the meetings of Parliament to Westminster. The names of the early statutes remind us of its convocation at the most various quarters, at Winchester, Acton Burnell, Northampton, or Oxford. It was at a later time that Parliament became settled in the straggling village which had grown up in the marshy swamp of the Isle of Thorns, beside the palace whose embattled pile towered over the Thames and the great minster which was still rising in Edward's day on the site of the older church of the Confessor. It is possible that, while contributing greatly to its constitutional importance, this settlement of the Parliament may have helped to throw into the background its character as a supreme court of appeal. The proclamation by which it was called together invited "all who had any grace to demand of the King in Parliament, or any plaint to make of matters

Representation of the Clergy

Restriction of Parliament to Westminster

Parliament as Court of Appeal

which could not be redressed or determined by ordinary course of law, or who had been in any way aggrieved by any of the King's ministers or justices or sheriffs, or their bailiffs, or any other officer, or have been unduly assessed, rated, charged or surcharged to aids, subsidies, or taxes," to deliver their petitions to receivers who sat in the Great Hall of the Palace of Westminster. The petitions were forwarded to the King's Council, and it was probably the extension of the jurisdiction of that body, and the subsequent rise of the Court of Chancery, which reduced this ancient right of the subject to the formal election of "Triers of Petitions" at the opening of every new Parliament by the House of Lords, a usage which is still continued. But it must have been owing to some memory of the older custom that the subject always looked for redress against injuries from the Crown or its ministers to the Parliament of the realm. 1290 to 1305

Section III.—The Conquest of Scotland, 1290—1305

[*Authorities.*—There is no contemporary Scottish account of this period; the earliest of the later accounts is the Bruce of Barbour (Scottish Text Society). The Jingle of Blind Harry is of no historical value. On the English side may be mentioned the "Annales Angliæ et Scotiæ," Rishanger's "Chronica," and Bartholomew Cotton, "Historia Anglicana" (Rolls Series); the documents for the period are contained in Rymer's "Fœdera," and Stevenson's "Documents illustrative of the History of Scotland." The best general history of Scotland is that by Hume Brown.]

If the personal character of Edward the First had borne but a small part in the constitutional changes which we have described, it becomes of the highest moment during the war with Scotland which covers the later half of his reign. Edward the First

In his own time, and amongst his own subjects, Edward was the object of almost boundless admiration. He was in the truest sense a national king. At the moment when the distinction between conquerors and conquered had passed away, and England felt herself once more a people, she saw in her ruler no stranger, but an Englishman. The national tradition returned in more than the golden hair or the English name which linked him to her earlier kings. Edward's very temper was English to the core. In good as in evil he stands out as the typical representative of his race, wilful and imperious as his people, tenacious of his rights, indomitable in his pride, dogged, stubborn, slow of apprehension, narrow in sympathy, but in the main just, unselfish, laborious, conscientious, haughtily observant of truth and self-respect, temperate, reverent of duty, religious. He had inherited the fierce ruthlessness of the Angevins, so that when he punished his punishments were without pity, and a priest who had ventured into his presence with a remonstrance from his order dropped dead from sheer fright at his feet. But for the most part his impulses were generous,

1290 to 1305

trustful, averse from cruelty, prone to forgiveness. "No man ever asked mercy of me," he said in his old age, "and was refused." The rough soldierly nobleness of his nature breaks out at Falkirk, where he lay on the bare ground among his men, or in his refusal during a Welsh campaign to drink of the one cask of wine which had been saved from marauders: "It is I who have brought you into this strait," he said to his thirsty fellow-soldiers, "and I will have no advantage of you in meat or drink." A strange tenderness and sensitiveness to affection lay in fact beneath the stern imperiousness of his outer bearing. Every yeoman throughout his realm was drawn closer to the King who wept bitterly at the news of his father's death, though it gave him a crown; whose fiercest burst of vengeance was called out by an insult to his mother; whose crosses rose as memorials of his love and sorrow at every spot where his wife's bier rested. "I loved her tenderly in her lifetime," wrote Edward to Eleanor's friend, the Abbot of Clugny; "I do not cease to love her now she is dead." And as it was with wife and child, so it was with his people at large. All the self-concentrated isolation of the earlier Angevins disappears in Edward. He is the first English king since the Conquest who loves his people with a personal love, and craves for their love back again. To his trust in them we owe our Parliament, to his care for them the great statutes which stand in the forefront of our laws. But even in his struggles with her England understood a temper which was so perfectly her own, and the quarrels between King and people during his reign are quarrels where, fiercely as they fought, neither disputant doubted for a moment the worth or affection of the other. Few scenes in our history are more touching than that which closes the long contest over the Charter, when Edward stood face to face with his people in Westminster Hall, and with a sudden burst of tears owned himself frankly in the wrong.

But it was just this sensitiveness, this openness to outer impressions and outer influences, that led to the strange contradictions which meet us in Edward's career. Under the first king whose temper was distinctly English a foreign influence told most fatally on our manners, our literature, our national spirit. The sudden rise of France into a compact and organized monarchy from the time of Philip Augustus had now made its influence dominant in Western Europe. The "chivalry" so familiar in Froissart, with its picturesque mimicry of high sentiment, of heroism, love, and courtesy—a mimicry before which all depth and reality of nobleness disappeared to make room for the coarsest profligacy, the narrowest caste-spirit, and a brutal indifference to human suffering—was specially of French creation. There was a nobleness in Edward's nature from which the baser influences of chivalry fell away. His life was pure, his piety even when it stooped to the superstition of the time manly and sincere, while his high sense of duty saved him from the frivolous self-indulgence of his successors. But he was far from being wholly free from the taint of his age.

His passionate desire was to be a model of the fashionable knighthood of his day. He had been famous from his very youth as a consummate general; Earl Simon had admired the skill of his advance at Evesham, and in his Welsh campaign he had shown a tenacity and force of will which wrested victory out of the midst of defeat. He could head a furious charge of horse at Lewes, or organize a commissariat which enabled him to move army after army across the harried Lowlands. In his old age he was quick to discover the value of the English archery, and to employ it as a means of victory at Falkirk. But his fame as a general seemed a small thing to Edward in comparison with his fame as a knight. He shared to the full his people's love of hard fighting. His frame, indeed, was that of a born soldier—tall, deep-chested, long of limb, capable alike of endurance or action. While fresh from the triumph of Evesham he encountered Adam Gurdon, a famous freebooter, and single-handed forced him to beg for mercy. At the opening of his reign he saved his life by sheer hard fighting in a tournament at Chalons. He was the first sovereign to introduce the sham warfare of the Tournament into England, where it had been rigidly prohibited by his predecessors and forbidden by the Church. We see the frivolous unreality of the new chivalry in his "Round Table" at Kenilworth, where a hundred knights and ladies, "clad all in silk," renewed the faded glories of Arthur's Court. The false air of romance which was soon to turn the gravest political resolutions into outbursts of sentimental feeling appears in his "Vow of the Swan," when, rising at the royal board, the old man swore on the dish before him to avenge on Scotland the murder of Comyn. Chivalry exerted on him a yet more fatal influence in its narrowing of all sympathy to the noble class, and its exclusion of the peasant and the craftsman from all claim to pity. It is the "knight without reproach" who looks calmly on at the massacre of Berwick, and sees in William Wallace nothing but a common robber. 1296 to 1305

Hardly less powerful than the French notion of chivalry in its influence on Edward's mind was the new French conception of kingship, feudality, and law. The rise of a lawyer class was everywhere hardening customary into written rights, allegiance into subjection, loose ties such as commendation into a definite vassalage. But it was specially through French influence, the influence of St. Lewis and his successors, that the imperial theories of the Roman Law were brought to bear upon this natural tendency of the time. When the "sacred majesty" of the Cæsars was transferred by a legal fiction to the royal head of a feudal baronage, every constitutional relation was radically changed. The "defiance" by which a vassal renounced service to his lord became treason, his after resistance "sacrilege." That Edward could appreciate what was sound and noble in the legal spirit around him was shown in his reforms of our judicature and our Parliament; but there was something even more congenial to his mind in its definiteness, its rigidity, its narrow technicalities. He was never

1290 to 1305

wilfully unjust, but he was captious in his justice, fond of legal chicanery, prompt to take advantage of the letter of the law. He was never wilfully untruthful; his abhorrence of falsehood showed itself in the words of his motto, "Keep Troth," but he often kept his troth in the spirit of an attorney. The high conception of royalty which he had borrowed from St. Lewis united with this legal turn of mind in the worst acts of his reign. Of rights or liberties unregistered in charter or roll Edward would know nothing. On the other hand, he was himself overpowered by the majesty of his crown. It was incredible to him that Scotland should revolt against a legal bargain which made her national independence conditional on the terms extorted from a claimant of her throne: nor could he view in any other light but as treason the resistance of his own baronage to an arbitrary taxation which their fathers had borne. It is in the very anomalies of such a character, in its strange union of justice and wrong-doing, of nobleness and meanness, that we must look for the explanation of Edward's conduct and policy in his later years.

Scotland

Fairly to understand his quarrel with the Scots, we must clear our minds of the ideas which we now associate with the words "Scotland," or the "Scotch people." At the opening of the fourteenth century the kingdom of the Scots was an aggregate of at least four distinct countries, each with its different people, its different tongue, its different history. The first of these was the district

Saxony

once called "Saxony," and which now bears the name of the Lowlands, the space, roughly speaking, between the Forth and the Tweed. We have seen that at the close of the English conquest of Britain the kingdom of Northumbria stretched from the Humber to the Firth of Forth, and of this kingdom the Lowlands formed simply the northern portion. The English conquest and the English colonization were as complete here as over the rest of Britain. Rivers and hills indeed retained their Celtic names, but the "tons" and "bams" scattered over the country told the story of its Teutonic settlement. Dodings and Levings left their name to Dodington and Livingston: Elphinston and Edmundston preserved the memory of English Elfins and Edmunds who had raised their homesteads along the Teviot and the Tweed. To the northward and westward of this Northumbrian land lay the kingdoms of the conquered. Over the "Waste" or Desert"—the range of barren moors which stretches from Derbyshire to the Cheviots—the Briton had sought a refuge in the long strip of coast

Cumbria

between the Clyde and the Dee which formed the earlier Cumbria. Against this kingdom the efforts of the Northumbrian rulers had been incessantly directed; the victory of Chester had severed it from the Welsh kingdoms to the south; Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland were already subdued by the time of Ecgfrith; while the wretched fragment which was suffered to remain unconquered between the Firths of Solway and of Clyde, and to which the name of Cumbria is in its later use confined, owned the

English supremacy. At the close of the seventh century, indeed, it seemed likely that the same supremacy would extend over the Welsh tribes to the north. To these Picts of the Highlands the land south of the Forth was a foreign land, and significant entries in their rude chronicles tell us how in their forays "the Picts made a raid upon Saxony." But they had long bowed to a vague acknowledgment of the English over-lordship: the English fortress of Edinburgh looked menacingly across the Forth, and at Abercorn beside it was established an English prelate with the title of Bishop of the Picts. Ecgfrith, in whose hands the power of Northumbria reached its highest point, marched across Forth to change this over-lordship into a direct dominion, and to bring the series of English victories to a close. His host poured burning and ravaging across the Tay, and skirted the base of the Grampians as far as the field of Nectansmere, where King Bruidi awaited them at the head of the Picts. The great battle which followed proved a turning-point in the history of the North; the invaders were cut to pieces, Ecgfrith himself being among the slain, and the power of Northumbria was broken for ever. On the other hand, the kingdom of the Picts started into new life with its great victory, and pushed its way in the hundred years that followed westward, eastward, and southward, till the whole country north of the Forth and the Clyde acknowledged its supremacy. But the hour of Pictish greatness was marked by the sudden extinction of the Pictish name. Centuries before, when the English invaders were beginning to harry the south coast of Britain, a fleet of coracles had borne a tribe of the Scots, as the inhabitants of Ireland were at that time called, from the white cliff-walls of Antrim to the rocky and indented coast of South Argyle. The little kingdom of Scot-land which these Irishmen founded slumbered in obscurity among the lakes and mountains to the south of Loch Lynne, now submitting to the over-lordship of Northumbria, now to that of the Picts, till the extinction of the direct Pictish line of sovereigns raised the Scot King, Kenneth Mac-alpin, who chanced to be their nearest kinsman, to the vacant throne. For fifty years these rulers of Scottish blood still call themselves "Kings of the Picts"; but with the opening of the tenth century the very name passes away, the tribe which had given its chief to the common throne gives its designation to the common realm, and "Pict-land" vanishes from the page of the chronicler or annalist to make way for the "land of the Scots."

1290 to 1305 — *Pict-land* — *Scot-land*

It was even longer before the change made way among the people itself, and the real union of the nation with its kings was only effected by the common suffering of the Danish wars. In the north, as in the south of Britain, the invasion of the Danes brought about political unity. Not only were Picts and Scots thoroughly blended into a single people, but by the annexation of Cumbria and the Lowlands, their monarchs became rulers of the territory which we now call Scotland. The annexation was owing to the new policy of the English Kings. Their aim, after the long struggle of

1290 to 1305

England with the Northmen, was no longer to crush the kingdom across the Forth, but to raise it into a bulwark against the Danes who were still settled in Caithness and the Orkneys, and for whose aggressions Scotland was the natural highway. On the other hand, it was only in English aid that the Scot Kings could find a support for their throne against these Danish Jarls of Orkney and Caithness. It was probably this common hostility to a common foe which brought about the "commendation" by which the Scots beyond the Forth, with the Welsh of Strath-clyde, chose the English King,

924

Eadward the Elder, "to father and lord." The choice, whatever weight after events may have given to it, seems to have been little more than the renewal of the loose English supremacy over the tribes of the North which had existed during the times of Northumbrian greatness; it certainly implied at the time nothing save a right on either side to military aid, though the aid then rendered was necessarily placed in the hands of the stronger party to the agreement. Such a connection naturally ceased in the event of any war between the two contracting parties; it was in fact by no means the feudal vassalage of a later time, but rather such a military convention as existed after Sadowa between the North-German Confederation and the States south of the Main. But loose as was the tie which bound the two countries, a closer tie soon bound the Scot King himself to his English overlord. Strath-clyde, which, after the defeat of Nectansmere, had shaken off the English yoke, and which at a later time had owned the supremacy of the Scots, rose into a temporary independence only to be conquered by the English Eadmund. By him it was granted to Malcolm of Scotland on the feudal tenure of distinct military service, and became from that time the appanage of the eldest son of the Scottish king. At a later time, under Eadgar or Cnut, the whole of Northern Northumbria, or what we now call the Lothians, was ceded to the Scottish sovereigns, but whether on the same terms of feudal dependence as an ordinary English earldom or on the same loose terms of "commendation" as already existed for lands north of the Forth, we have no means of deciding. The retreat, however, of the bounds of the great English bishopric of the North, the see of St. Cuthbert, as far southward as the Pentland Hills, would seem to imply a greater change in the political character of the ceded district than the first theory would allow.

Grant of Strath-clyde to the Scot King

Grant of Northern Northumbria

England and Scot Kings

Whatever change these cessions may have brought about in the relation of the Scot Kings to their English overlords, they certainly affected in a very marked way their relation both to England and to their own realm. The first result of the acquisition of the Lowlands was the fixing of the royal residence in their new southern dominions at Edinburgh; and the English civilization with which they were then surrounded changed the Scot Kings in all but blood into Englishmen. A way soon opened itself to the English crown by the marriage of Malcolm with Margaret, the sister of Eadgar Etheling. Their children were regarded by a large party

within England as representatives of the older royal race and as claimants of the throne, and this danger grew as the terrible Norman devastation of the North not only drove fresh multitudes of Englishmen to settle in the Lowlands, but filled the Scotch Court with English nobles who had fled thither for refuge. So formidable, indeed, became the pretensions of the Scot Kings, that they forced the ablest of our Norman sovereigns into a complete change of polity. The Conqueror and William the Red had met the threats of the Scot sovereigns by invasions which ended again and again in an illusory homage. The marriage of Henry the First with the Scottish princess Matilda not only robbed of their force the claims of the Scottish line, but enabled him to draw it into far closer relations with the Norman throne. King David not only abandoned the ambitious dreams of his predecessors, to place himself at the head of his niece Matilda's party in her contest with Stephen, but as Henry's brother-in-law he figured as the first noble of the English Court, and found English models and English support in the work of organization which he attempted within his own dominions. As the marriage with Margaret had changed Malcolm from a Celtic chieftain into an English King, so that of Matilda converted David into a Norman and feudal sovereign. His Court was filled with Norman nobles from the South, such as the Balliols and Bruces who were destined to play so great a part afterwards but who now for the first time obtained fiefs in the Scottish realm, and a feudal jurisprudence modelled on that of England was introduced into the Lowlands. Throughout these changes of front, however, both at home and abroad, the question of the English over-lordship remained unchanged. It was the capture of William the Lion during the revolt of the English baronage which first suggested to the ambition of Henry the Second the project of a closer dependence of Scotland on the English Crown. To gain his freedom, William consented to hold his crown of Henry and his heirs, the prelates and lords of the Scotch kingdom did homage to Henry as to their direct lord, and a right of appeal in all Scotch causes was allowed to the superior court of the English suzerain. From this bondage, however, Scotland was soon freed by the wise prodigality of Richard, who allowed her to repurchase the freedom she had forfeited, and from that time the difficulties of the older claim were prudently evaded by a legal compromise. The Scot King repeatedly did homage, but with a distinct protest that it was rendered for lands which he held in fief within the realm of England. The English King accepted the homage with a counter-protest that it was rendered to him as overlord of the Scottish realm. But for nearly a hundred years the relations of the two countries had remained peaceful and friendly, when the death of Alexander the Third seemed destined to remove even the necessity of protests by a closer union of the two kingdoms. Alexander had left but a single grandchild, the daughter of the Norwegian King, and after long negotiation the

1290 to 1305

David

1290 to 1305 — 1290

Scotch Parliament proposed the marriage of "the Maid of Norway" with the son of Edward the First. It was, however, carefully provided in the marriage treaty of Brigham that Scotland should remain a separate and free kingdom, and that its laws and customs should be preserved inviolate. No military aid was to be claimed by the English King, no Scotch appeal to be carried to an English court. The project, however, was abruptly frustrated by the child's death on her voyage to Scotland, and with the rise of claimant after claimant of the vacant throne Edward was drawn into far other relations to the Scottish realm.

The First Conquest 1290 to 1296

Of the thirteen pretenders to the throne of Scotland, only three could be regarded as serious claimants. By the extinction of the line of William the Lion the right of succession passed to the daughters of his brother David, and the claim of John Balliol, Lord of Galloway, rested on his descent from the elder of these, that of Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, on his descent from the second, that of John Hastings, Lord of Abergavenny, on his descent from the third.

It is clear that at this crisis everyone in Scotland or out of it recognized some sort of over-lordship in Edward, for the Norwegian King, the Primate of St. Andrews, and seven of the Scotch Earls, had already appealed to him before Margaret's death, and the death itself was followed by the consent of both the claimants and the Council of Regency to refer the question of the succession to his decision in a Parliament at Norham. But the over-lordship which the Scots acknowledged was something far less direct and definite than what Edward claimed at the opening of this conference. The royal claim was supported by excerpts from monastic chronicles, and by the slow advance of an English army, while the Scotch lords, taken by surprise, found little help in the delay which was granted them, and at last in common with the claimants themselves, formally admitted Edward's direct suzerainty. To the nobles, in fact, the concession must have seemed a small one; like the principal claimants they were for the most part Norman in blood, with estates in both countries, and looking for honours and pensions from the English Court. From the Commons no admission of Edward's claims could be extorted, but in Scotland, feudalized as it had been by David, the Commons were as yet of little weight, and their opposition was quietly passed by. All the rights of a feudal suzerain were at once assumed by the English King; he entered into the possession of the country as into that of a disputed fief to be held by its over-lord till the dispute was settled, his peace was sword throughout the land, its castles delivered into his charge, while its bishops and nobles swore homage to him directly as their lord superior. Scotland was thus reduced to the subjection which she had experienced under Henry the Second, but the full discussion which followed over the various claims to the throne showed, that while exacting to the full what he believed to be his right, Edward desired to do justice to the

May, 1291

country itself. The body of commissioners which the King nominated were mainly Scotch, a proposal for the partition of the realm among the claimants was rejected as contrary to the Scotch law, and the claim of Balliol as representative of the elder branch preferred to that of his rivals. 1290 to 1305

The castles were at once delivered to the new monarch, and Balliol did homage to Edward with full acknowledgment of the services due to him from the realm of Scotland. For a time there was peace. Edward in fact seemed to have no desire to push farther the rights of his crown. Even allowing that Scotland was a dependent kingdom, it was far from being according to feudal custom an ordinary fief. A distinction had always been held to exist between the relation of a dependent king to his superior lord and those of a vassal noble to his sovereign. At Balliol's homage, Edward had disclaimed, in strict accordance with the marriage treaty of Brigham, any right to the ordinary incidents of a fief, those of wardship or marriage; but there were other customs of the realm of Scotland as incontestable as these. Ecclesiastically, Scotland was independent of any see but that of Rome. Its sovereign again had never been held bound to attend the Council of the English Baronage, to do service in English warfare, or to contribute on the part of his Scotch possessions to English aids. No express acknowledgment of these rights had been given by Edward, but for a time they were practically observed. The right of free justice was as clear as the rest. Since the days of William the Lion no appeal from a Scotch King's Court to that of his overlord had been allowed, and the judicial independence of Scotland had been expressly acknowledged in the marriage treaty. This right of appeal Edward now determined to enforce, and Balliol at first gave way. 1293 The resentment, however, both of his Baronage and his people, forced him to resist; and while appearing formally at Westminster he refused to answer an appeal save by the advice of his Council. He was in fact looking to France, which, as we shall afterwards see, was jealously watching Edward's proceedings, and ready to force him into war. By a new breach of customary law Edward summoned the Scotch nobles to follow him in arms against this foreign foe. But the summons was disregarded, and a second and formal refusal of aid was followed by a secret alliance with France and by a Papal absolution of Balliol from his oath of fealty.

Edward was still reluctant to begin the war, when his scruples 1296 were relieved by the refusal of Balliol to attend his Parliament at Newcastle, the massacre of a small body of English troops, and the investment of Carlisle by the Scots. Orders were at once given for an advance upon Berwick. The taunts of its citizens stung the King to the quick. "Kynge Edward, waune thou havest Berwick, pike thee; waune thou havest geten, dike thee," they shouted from behind the wooden stockade, which formed the only rampart of the town. But the stockade was stormed with the loss of a single knight, and nearly eight thousand of the citizens were mown down

1290 to 1305

in a ruthless carnage, while a handful of Flemish traders who held the town-hall stoutly against all assailants were burned alive in it. The massacre only ceased when a procession of priests bore the host to the King's presence, praying for mercy, and Edward with a sudden and characteristic burst of tears called off his troops; but the town was ruined for ever, and the great merchant city of the North sank from that time into a petty seaport. At Berwick Edward received Balliol's defiance. "Has the fool done this folly?" the King cried in haughty scorn. "If he will not come to us, we will come to him." The terrible slaughter, however, had done its work, and his march was a triumphal progress. Edinburgh, Stirling, and Perth opened their gates, Bruce joined the English army, and Balliol himself surrendered and passed without a blow from his throne to an English prison. No further punishment, however, was exacted from the prostrate realm. Edward simply treated it as a fief, and declared its forfeiture to be the legal consequence of Balliol's treason. It lapsed in fact to the overlord, and its earls, barons, and gentry swore homage in Parliament at Berwick to Edward as their king. The sacred stone on which its older sovereigns had been installed, an oblong block of limestone, which legend asserted to have been the pillow of Jacob as angels ascended and descended upon him, was removed from Scone and placed in Westminster by the shrine of the Confessor. It was enclosed by Edward's order in a stately seat, which became from that hour the coronation chair of English kings.

The Second Conquest 1297 to 1305

To the King himself the whole business must have seemed another and easier conquest of Wales, and the mercy and just government which had followed his first success followed his second also. The government of the new dependency was entrusted to Warrenne, Earl of Surrey, at the head of an English Council of Regency. Pardon was freely extended to all who had resisted the invasion, and order and public peace were rigidly enforced. But both the justice and injustice of the new rule proved fatal to it; the wrath of the Scots, already kindled by the intrusion of English priests into Scotch livings, and by the grant of land across the border to English barons, was fanned to fury by the strict administration of law, and the repression of feuds and cattle-lifting. The disbanding, too, of troops, which was caused by the penury of the royal exchequer, united with the licence of the soldiery who remained as a protection of the English rule to quicken the national sense of wrong. The disgraceful submission of their leaders brought the people themselves to the front. In spite of a hundred years of peace the farmer of the Lowlands and the artisan of the towns remained stout-hearted Northumbrian Englishmen; they had never consented to Edward's supremacy, and their blood rose against the insolent rule of the stranger. The genius of an outlaw knight, William Wallace, saw in their smouldering discontent a hope of freedom for his country, and his daring raids on outlying parties of the English soldiery soon roused the Lowlands

into revolt. Of Wallace himself, of his life or temper, we know little or nothing; the very traditions of his gigantic stature and enormous strength are dim and unhistorical. But the instinct of the Scotch people has guided it aright in choosing Wallace for its national hero. He was the first to sweep aside the technicalities of feudal law and to assert freedom as a national birthright. Amidst the despair of nobles and priests he called the people itself to arms, and his discovery of the military value of the stout peasant footman, who had till then been scorned by baronage and knighthood—a discovery copied by the burghers of Flanders, and repeated in the victories of the Swiss—gave a deathblow to the system of feudalism and changed in the end the face of Europe. At the head of an army drawn principally from the coast districts north of the Tay, which were inhabited by a population of the same blood as that of the Lowlands, Wallace occupied the valley near Stirling, the pass between the north and the south, and awaited the English advance. The offers of Earl Warrenne were scornfully rejected: "We have come here," said the Scottish leader, "not for peace, but to free our country." The position of Wallace, a semicircle of hills behind a loop of Forth, was in fact chosen with consummate skill. The one bridge which crossed the river was only broad enough to admit two horsemen abreast; and though the English army had been passing from daybreak, only half its force was across at noon when Wallace closed on it and cut it, after a short combat, to pieces, in the sight of its helpless comrades. The retreat of Warrenne over the border left Wallace head of the country he had freed, and for a time we find him acting as "Guardian of the Realm" in Balliol's name, and heading a wild foray into Northumberland. His reduction of Stirling Castle at last called Edward to the field. The King, who marched northward with a larger host than had ever followed his banner, was enabled by treachery to surprise Wallace, as he fell back to avoid an engagement, and to force him to battle near Falkirk. The Scotch force still consisted almost wholly of foot, and Wallace drew up his spearmen in four great hollow circles or squares, the outer ranks kneeling, and the whole supported by bowmen within, while a small force of horse were drawn up as a reserve in the rear. It was the formation of Waterloo, the first appearance in our history since the day of Senlac of "that unconquerable British infantry," before which chivalry was destined to go down. For a moment it had all Waterloo's success. "I have brought you to the ring, hop (dance) if you can," are words of rough humour that reveal the very soul of the patriot leader, and the serried ranks answered well to his appeal. The Bishop of Durham who led the English van shrunk wisely from the look of the squares. "Back to your mass, Bishop," shouted the reckless knights behind him, but the body of horse dashed itself vainly on the wall of spears. Terror spread through the English army, and its Welsh auxiliaries drew off in a body from the field, till the generalship of Wallace was met

1290 to 1305

Battle of Stirling, Sept. 1297

Battle of Falkirk, July 1298

1290 to 1305 by that of the King. Drawing his bowmen to the front, Edward riddled the Scottish ranks with arrows, and then hurled his cavalry afresh on the wavering front. In a moment all was over, and the maddened knights rode in and out of the broken ranks, slaying without mercy. Thousands fell on the field, Wallace himself escaped with difficulty, followed by a handful of men. But ruined as the cause of freedom seemed, his work was done; he had roused Scotland into life, and even a defeat like Falkirk left her unconquered. Edward remained master of the ground he stood on; and as soon as want of supplies forced him to retreat, a native regency of the nobles under Bruce and Comyn continued the struggle for independence. For a time dangers from abroad stayed Edward's
1300 hand; France was still menacing, and a claim advanced by Pope Boniface the Eighth, at its suggestion, to the feudal superiority over Scotland, arrested a fresh advance of the King. The quarrel,
1303 however, between Philip le Bel and the Papacy which soon followed removed all obstacles, and enabled him to defy Boniface and to
1305 wring from France a treaty in which Scotland was abandoned. Edward at once resumed the work of invasion, and again the nobles flung down their arms as he marched to the North. Comyn, at the head of the Regency, acknowledged his sovereignty, and the surrender of Stirling completed the conquest of Scotland. The triumph of Edward was but the prelude to the full execution of his designs for knitting the two countries together by a clemency and wisdom which reveal the greatness of his statesmanship. A general amnesty was extended to all who had shared in the revolt. Wallace, who refused indeed to avail himself of Edward's mercy, was captured and condemned to death at Westminster on charges of treason, sacrilege, and robbery. The head of the great patriot, crowned in mockery with a circlet of laurel, was placed upon London Bridge. But the execution of Wallace was the one blot on Edward's clemency. With a masterly boldness he entrusted the government of the country to a council of Scotch nobles, many of whom were freshly pardoned for their share in the war, and anticipated the policy of Cromwell by allotting ten representatives to Scotland in the Common Parliament of his realm. A Convocation was summoned at Perth for the election of these representatives, and a great judicial scheme which was promulgated in this assembly adopted the amended laws of David as the base of a new legislation, and divided the country for judicial purposes into four districts, Lothian, Galloway, the Highlands, and the land between the Highlands and the Forth, at the head of each of which were placed two justiciaries, the one English and the other Scotch.

Strathclyde was finally annexed to the kingdom of Scotland by Malcolm I. (1005-1034), who also acquired the Lothians as a result of his victory at Carham. For the question of the overlordship, see Freeman, "Relations between the Crowns of England and Scotland."

Section IV.—The English Town

Authorities.—The "Liber de Antiquis Legibus" (Camden Society), and the chronicles contained in "Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I. and Edward II." (Rolls Series), with the introduction by Stubbs. The sedition of William Longbeard is described in the contemporary chronicles of Richard I.'s reign, especially in those of William of Newburgh and Gervase of Canterbury. For a bibliography of municipal records, see Gross, "Bibliography of British Municipal History." Among modern works may be mentioned Cunningham's "Growth of British Industry and Commerce"; Maitland, "Township and Borough"; and Gross, "The Gild Merchant."]

From scenes such as we have been describing, from the wrong and bloodshed of foreign conquest, we pass to the peaceful life and progress of England itself.

Through the reign of the three Edwards two revolutions, which have been almost ignored by our historians, were silently changing the whole character of English society. The first of these, the rise of a new class of tenant-farmers, we shall have to notice hereafter in its connection with the great agrarian revolt which bears the name of Wat Tyler. The second, the rise of the Craftsmen within our towns, and the struggle by which they won power and privilege from the older burghers, is the most remarkable event in the period of our national history at which we have arrived.

The Early English Boroughs

We have already briefly described the outer progress of the earlier English boroughs. In England the town was originally, in every case save that of London, a mere bit of land within the lordship, whether of the king or some great noble or ecclesiastic, whose inhabitants happened, either for purposes of trade or protection, to cluster together more closely than elsewhere. It is this characteristic of our boroughs that separates them at once from the cities of Italy and Provence, which had preserved the municipal institutions of their Roman origins, from the German towns founded by Henry the Fowler with the special purpose of sheltering industry from the feudal oppression around them, or from the French communes which at a later time sprang into existence in sheer revolt against feudal outrage within their walls. In England the tradition of Rome had utterly passed away, while the oppression of feudalism was held fairly in check by the power of the Crown. The English town, therefore, was in its beginning simply a piece of the general country, organized and governed in the same way as the manors around it, that is to say, justice was administered, its annual rent collected, and its customary services exacted by the reeve or steward of the lord to whose estate it belonged. To modern eyes the subjection which these services involved might seem complete. When Leicester, for instance, passed from the hands of the Conqueror into those of its Earls, its townsmen were bound to reap their lord's corn-crops, to grind at his mill, to redeem their strayed cattle from his pound. The great forest around was the Earl's, and

it was only out of his grace that the little borough could drive its swine into the woods or pasture its cattle in the glades. The justice and government of the town lay wholly in its master's hand; he appointed its bailiffs, received the fines and forfeitures of his tenants, and the fees and tolls of their markets and fairs. But when once these dues were paid and these services rendered the English townsman was practically free. His rights were as rigidly defined by custom as those of his lord. Property and person alike were secured against arbitrary seizure. He could demand a fair trial on any charge, and even if justice was administered by his master's reeve it was administered in the presence and with the assent of his fellow-townsmen. The bell which swung out from the town tower gathered the burgesses to a common meeting, where they could exercise rights of free speech and free deliberation on their own affairs. Their merchant-gild over its ale-feast regulated trade, distributed the sums due from the town among the different burgesses, looked to the due repairs of gate and wall, and acted, in fact, pretty much the same part as a town-council of to-day. Not only, too, were these rights secured by custom from the first, but they were constantly widening as time went on. Whenever we get a glimpse of the inner history of an English town, we find the same peaceful revolution in progress, services disappearing, through disuse or omission, while privileges and immunities are being purchased in hard cash. The lord of the town, whether he were king, baron, or abbot, was commonly thriftless or poor, and the capture of a noble, or the campaign of a sovereign, or the building of some new minster by a prior, brought about an appeal to the thrifty burghers, who were ready to fill again their master's treasury at the price of the strip of parchment which gave them freedom of trade, of justice, and of government. Sometimes a chance story lights up for us this work of emancipation. At Leicester, one of the chief aims of its burgesses was to regain their old English jury trial (or practice of compurgation) which had been abolished by the Earls in favour of the foreign trial by duel. "It chanced," says a charter of the place, "that two kinsmen, Nicholas the son of Acon, and Geoffrey the son of Nicholas, waged a duel about a certain piece of land, concerning which a dispute had arisen between them; and they fought from the first to the ninth hour, each conquering by turns. Then one of them fleeing from the other till he came to a certain little pit, as he stood on the brink of the pit, and was about to fall therein, his kinsman said to him, 'Take care of the pit, turn back lest thou shouldest fall in to it.' Thereat so much clamour and noise was made by the bystanders and those who were sitting around, that the Earl heard these clamours as far off as the castle, and he inquired of some how it was there was such a clamour, and answer was made to him that two kinsmen were fighting about a certain piece of ground, and that one had fled till he reached a certain little pit, and that as he stood over the pit and was about to fall into it the other warned him.

Then the townsmen being moved with pity, made a covenant with the Earl that they should give him threepence yearly for each house in the High Street that had a gable, on condition that he should grant to them that the twenty-four jurors who were in Leicester from ancient times should from that time forward discuss and decide all pleas they might have among themselves." For the most part the liberties of our towns were bought in this way, by sheer hard bargaining. The earliest English Charters, save that of London, date from the years when the treasury of Henry the First was drained by his Norman wars; and grants of municipal liberty made professedly by the Angevins are probably the result of their costly employment of mercenary troops. At the close, however, of the thirteenth century, this work of outer emancipation was practically complete. All the more important English towns had secured the right of justice in their own borough-courts, of self-government, and of self-taxation, and their liberties and charters served as models and incentives to the smaller communities which were struggling into life.

The Frith Gilds

During the progress of this outer revolution, the inner life of the English town was in the same quiet and hardly conscious way developing itself from the common form of the life around it into a form especially its own. Within as without the ditch or stockade which formed the first boundary of the borough, land was from the first the test of freedom, and the possession of land was what constituted the townsman. We may take, perhaps, a foreign instance to illustrate this fundamental point in our municipal history. When Duke Berthold of Zahringen resolved to found Freiburg, his 'free town,' in the Brisgau, the mode he adopted was to gather a group of traders together, and to give each man a plot of ground for his freehold round what was destined to be the market-place of the new community. In England the 'landless' man had no civic as he had no national existence; the 'town' was simply an association of the landed proprietors within its bounds; nor was there anything in this association, as it originally existed, which could be considered peculiar or exceptional. The constitution of the English town, however different its form may have afterwards become, was at the first simply that of the people at large. We have before seen that among the German races society rested on the basis of the family, that it was the family who fought and settled side by side, and the kinsfolk who were bound together in ties of mutual responsibility to each other and to the law. As society became more complex and less stationary it necessarily outgrew these simple ties of blood, and in England this dissolution of the family bond seems to have taken place at the very time when Danish incursions and the growth of a feudal temper among the nobles rendered an isolated existence most perilous for the freeman. His only resource was to seek protection among his fellow-freemen, and to replace the older brotherhood of the kinsfolk by a voluntary association of his neighbours for

the same purposes of order and self-defence. The tendency to unite in such 'Frith-gilds' or Peace-clubs became general throughout Europe during the ninth and tenth centuries, but on the Continent it was roughly met and repressed. The successors of Charles the Great enacted penalties of scourging, nose-slitting, and banishment against voluntary unions, and even a league of the poor peasants of Gaul against the inroads of the Northmen was suppressed by the swords of the Frankish nobles. In England the attitude of the Kings was utterly different. The system of 'frank-pledge,' or free engagement of neighbour for neighbour, was accepted after the Danish wars as the base of social order. Alfred recognized the common responsibility of the members of the 'frith-gild' side by side with that of the kinsfolk, and Athelstan accepted 'frith-gilds' as the constituent element of borough life in the Dooms of London.

The Merchant Gild

The frith-gild, then, in the earlier English town, was precisely similar to the frith-gilds which formed the basis of social order in the country at large. An oath of mutual fidelity among its members was substituted for the tie of blood, while the gild-feast, held once a month in the common hall, replaced the gathering of the kinsfolk round their family hearth. But within this new family the aim of the frith-gild was to establish a mutual responsibility as close as that of the old. "Let all share the same lot," ran its law; "if any misdo, let all bear it." Its member could look for aid from his gild-brothers in atoning for any guilt incurred by mishap. He could call on them for assistance in case of violence or wrong: if falsely accused, they appeared in court as his compurgators; if poor, they supported, and when dead they buried him. On the other hand, he was responsible to them, as they were to the State, for order and obedience to the laws. A wrong of brother against brother was also a wrong against the general body of the gild, and was punished by fine, or in the last resort by expulsion which left the offender a 'lawless' man and an outcast. The one difference between these gilds in country and town was, that in the latter case, from their close local neighbourhood, they tended inevitably to coalesce. Under Athelstan the London gilds united into one for the purpose of carrying out more effectually their common aims, and at a later time we find the gilds of Berwick enacting "that where many bodies are found side by side in one place they may become one, and have one will, and in the dealings of one with another have a strong and hearty love." The process was probably a long and difficult one, for the brotherhoods naturally differed much in social rank, and even after the union was effected we see traces of the separate existence to a certain extent of some one or more of the wealthier or more aristocratic gilds. In London, for instance, the Knighten-gild, which seems to have stood at the head of its fellows, retained for a long time its separate property, while its Alderman—as the chief officer of each gild was called—became the Alderman of the united gild of the whole city. In

Canterbury, we find a similar gild of Thanes, from which the chief officers of the town seem commonly to have been selected. Imperfect, however, as the union might be, when once it was effected the town passed from a mere collection of brotherhoods into a powerful and organized community, whose character was inevitably determined by the circumstances of its origin. In their beginnings our boroughs seem to have been mainly gatherings of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits; the first Dooms of London provide especially for the recovery of cattle belonging to the citizens. But as the increasing security of the country invited the farmer or the squire to settle apart in his own fields, and the growth of estate and trade told on the towns themselves, the difference between town and country became more sharply defined. London, of course, took the lead in this new development of civic life. Even in Athelstan's day every London merchant who had made three long voyages on his own account ranked as a Thane. Its 'lithsmen,' or shippers'-gild, were of sufficient importance under Harthacnut to figure in the election of a king, and its principal street still tells of the rapid growth of trade, in the name of 'Cheap-side,' or the bargaining place. But at the Norman Conquest the commercial tendency had become universal. The name given to the united brotherhood is in almost every case no longer that of the 'town-gild,' but of the 'merchant-gild.'

The Craft-Gilds

This social change in the character of the townsmen produced important results in the character of their municipal institutions. In becoming a merchant-gild the body of citizens who formed the 'town,' enlarged their powers of civic legislation by applying them to the control of their internal trade. It became their special business to obtain from the Crown, or from their lords, wider commercial privileges, rights of coinage, grants of fairs, and exemption from tolls; while within the town itself they framed regulations as to the sale and quality of goods, the control of markets, and the recovery of debts. A yet more important result sprang from the increase of population which the growth of wealth and industry brought with it. The mass of the new settlers, composed as they were of escaped serfs, of traders without landed holdings, of families who had lost their original lot in the borough, and generally of the artisans and the poor, had no part in the actual life of the town. The right of trade and of the regulation of trade, in common with all other forms of jurisdiction, lay wholly in the hands of the landed burghers whom we have described. By a natural process, too, their superiority in wealth produced a fresh division between the 'burghers' of the merchant-gild and the unenfranchised mass around them. The same change which severed at Florence the seven Greater Arts, or trades, from the fourteen Lesser Arts, and which raised the three occupations of banking, the manufacture and the dyeing of cloth, to a position of superiority even within the privileged circle of the seven, told, though with less force, on the English boroughs. The burghers of the merchant-gild gradually

concentrated themselves on the greater operations of commerce, on trades which required a larger capital, while the meaner employments of general traffic were abandoned to their poorer neighbours. This advance in the division of labour is marked by such severances as we note in the thirteenth century of the cloth merchant from the tailor, or the leather merchant from the butcher. But the result of this severance was all-important in its influence on the constitution of our towns. The members of the trades thus abandoned by the wealthier burghers formed themselves into craft-gilds, which soon rose into dangerous rivalry with the original merchant-gild of the town. A seven years' apprenticeship formed the necessary prelude to full membership of any trade-gild. Their regulations were of the minutest character; the quality and value of work was rigidly prescribed, the hours of toil fixed "from day-break to curfew," and strict provision made against competition in labour. At each meeting of these gilds their members gathered round the Craft-box, which contained the rules of their Society, and stood with bared heads as it was opened. The warden and a quorum of gild-brothers formed a court which enforced the ordinances of the gild, inspected all work done by its members, or confiscated unlawful tools or unworthy goods; and disobedience to their orders was punished by fines, or in the last resort by expulsion, which involved the loss of right to trade. A common fund was raised by contributions among the members, which not only provided for the trade objects of the gild, but sufficed to found chantries and masses, and erect painted windows in the church of their patron saint. Even at the present day the arms of the craft-gild may often be seen blazoned in cathedrals side by side with those of prelates and of kings. But it was only by slow degrees that they rose to such eminence as this. The first steps in their existence were the most difficult, for to enable a trade-gild to carry out its objects with any success, it was necessary, first, that the whole body of craftsmen belonging to the trade should be compelled to belong to it, and secondly, that a legal control over the trade itself should be secured to it. A royal charter was indispensable for these purposes, and over the grant of these charters took place the first struggle with the merchant-gild, which had till then solely exercised jurisdiction over trade within the boroughs. The weavers, who were the first to secure royal sanction in the reign of Henry the First, were still engaged in the contest for existence as late as the reign of John, when the citizens of London bought for a time the suppression of their gild. Even under the house of Lancaster, Exeter was engaged in resisting the establishment of a tailor's gild. From the eleventh century, however, the spread of these societies went steadily on, and the control of trade passed from the merchant-gilds to the new craft-gilds.

The Greater and Lesser Folk

It is this struggle, to use the technical terms of the time, of the "greater folk" against the "lesser folk," or of the "commune," the general mass of the inhabitants, against the "prudhommes," or

"wiser" few, which brought about, as it passed from the regulation of trade to the general government of the town, the great civic revolution of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the Continent, and especially along the Rhine, the struggle was as fierce as the supremacy of the older burghers had been complete. In Köln the craftsmen had been reduced to all but serfage, and the merchant of Brussels might box at his will the ears of "the man without heart or honour who lives by his toil." Such social tyranny of class over class brought a century of bloodshed to the cities of Germany; but in England the tyranny of class over class had been restrained by the general tenor of the law, and the revolution took for the most part a milder form. The longest and bitterest strife of all was naturally at London. Nowhere had the territorial constitution struck root so deeply, and nowhere had the landed oligarchy risen to such a height of wealth and influence. The city was divided into wards, each of which was governed by an alderman drawn from the ruling class. In some, indeed, the office seems to have become hereditary. The "magnates," or "barons," of the merchant-gild advised alone on all matters of civic government or trade regulation, and distributed or assessed at their will the revenues or burthens of the town. Such a position afforded an opening for corruption and oppression of the most galling kind; and it seems to have been the general impression of the unfairness of the assessment levied on the poor, and the undue burthens which were thrown on the unenfranchised classes, which provoked the first serious discontent. William of the Long Beard, himself one of the governing body, placed himself at the head of a conspiracy which numbered, in the terrified fancy of the burghers, fifty thousand of the craftsmen. His eloquence, his bold defiance of the aldermen in the town-mote, gained him at any rate a wide popularity, and the crowds who surrounded him hailed him as "the saviour of the poor." One of his addresses is luckily preserved to us by a hearer of the time. In mediæval fashion he began with a text from the Vulgate, "Ye shall draw water with joy from the fountain of the Saviour." "I," he began, "am the saviour of the poor. Ye poor men who have felt the weight of rich men's hands, draw from my fountain waters of wholesome instruction and that with joy, for the time of your visitation is at hand. For I will divide the waters from the waters. It is the people who are the waters, and I will divide the lowly and faithful folk from the proud and faithless folk; I will part the chosen from the reprobate as light from darkness." But it was in vain that by appeals to the King he strove to win royal favour for the popular cause. The support of the moneyed classes was essential to Richard in the costly wars with Philip of France, and the Justiciary, Archbishop Hubert, after a moment of hesitation, issued orders for his arrest. William seized an axe and felled the first soldier who advanced to seize him, and taking refuge with a few adherents in the tower of Saint Mary-le-Bow, summoned his adherents to rise. Hubert, however,

who had already flooded the city with troops, with bold contempt of the right of sanctuary set fire to the tower and forced William to surrender. A burgher's son, whose father he had slain, stabbed him as he came forth, and with his death the quarrel slumbered for more than fifty years.

The Commune

No further movement, in fact, took place till the outbreak of the Barons' wars, but the city had all through the interval been seething with discontent; the unenfranchised craftsmen, under pretext of preserving the peace, had united in secret frith-gilds of their own, and mobs rose from time to time to sack the houses of foreigners and the wealthier burghers. But it was not till the civil war began that the open contest recommenced. The craftsmen forced their way into the town-mote and setting aside the aldermen and magnates, chose Thomas-fitz-Thomas for their mayor. Although dissension still raged during the reign of the second Edward, we may regard this election as marking the final victory of the craft-gilds. Under his successor all contest seems to have ceased: charters had been granted to every trade, their ordinances formally recognized and enrolled in the mayor's court, and distinctive liveries assumed to which they owed the name of "Livery Companies," which they still retain. The wealthier citizens, who found their old power broken, regained influence by enrolling themselves as members of the trade-gilds, and Edward the Third himself humoured the current of civic feeling by becoming a member of the gild of Armourers. This event marks the time when the government of our towns had become more really popular than it ever again became till the Municipal Reform Act of our own days. It had passed from the hands of an oligarchy into those of the middle classes, and there was nothing as yet to foretell the reactionary revolution by which the trade-gilds themselves became an oligarchy as narrow as that which they had deposed.

1261

Section V.—The King and the Baronage, 1290—1327

[*Authorities.*—The Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I. and Edward II. (vol. ii., Rolls Series), and the "Continuatio Chronicorum" of Adam Murimuth (Rolls Series), may be added for the reign of Edward II. For this reign Trokelowe, "Annales," and Blaneforde, "Chronica" (Chroniclers of St. Alban's, Rolls Series), are also important.]

England under Edward I.

If we turn again to the constitutional history of England from the accession of Edward the First we find a progress not less real but chequered with darker vicissitudes than the progress of our towns. Able as Edward undoubtedly was, he failed utterly to recognize the great transfer of power which had been brought about by the long struggle for the Charter, by the reforms of Earl Simon, and by his own earlier legislation. His conception of kingship was that of a just and religious Henry the Second, but his England was as different from the England of Henry as the Parlia-

ment of the one was different from the Great Council of the other. In the rough rimes of Robert of Gloucester we read the simple political creed of the people at large. 1290 to 1327

> "When the land through God's grace to good peace was brought
> For to have the old laws the high men turned their thought:
> For to have, as we said erst, the good old Law,
> The King made his charter and granted it with sawe."

But the power which the Charter had wrested from the Crown fell not to the people but to the Baronage. The farmer and the artisan, though they could fight in some great crisis for freedom, had as yet no wish to interfere in the common task of government. The vast industrial change in both town and country, which had begun during the reign of Henry the Third, and which continued with increasing force during that of his son, absorbed the energy and attention of the trading classes. In agriculture, the inclosure of common lands and the introduction of the system of leases on the part of the great proprietors, coupled with the subdivision of estates which was facilitated by Edward's legislation, was gradually creating out of the masses of rural bondsmen a new class of tenant farmers, whose whole energy was absorbed in their own great rise to social freedom. The very causes which rendered the growth of municipal liberty so difficult, increased the wealth of the towns. To the trade with Norway and the Hanse towns of North Germany, the wool-trade with Flanders, and the wine trade with Gascony, was now added a fast increasing commerce with Italy and Spain. The great Venetian merchant galleys appeared on the English coast, Florentine traders settled in the southern ports, the bankers of Lucca followed those of Cahors, who had already dealt a death-blow to the usury of the Jews. But the wealth and industrial energy of the country was shown, not only in the rise of a capitalist class, but in a crowd of civil and ecclesiastical buildings which distinguished this period. Christian architecture reached its highest beauty in the opening of Edward's reign, a period marked by the completion of the abbey church of Westminster and the exquisite cathedral church at Salisbury. The noble of the day was proud to be styled "an incomparable builder," while some traces of the art of Italy, which was just springing into life, flowed in with the Italian ecclesiastics whom the Papacy was forcing on the English Church. In the abbey of Westminster the shrine of the Confessor, the mosaic pavement, and the paintings on the walls of minster and chapter-house, remind us of the school which was about to spring up under Giotto.

The Baronage and its rule

But even had this industrial distraction been wanting the trading classes had no mind to claim any direct part in the actual work of government. It was a work which, in default of the Crown, fell naturally, according to the ideas of the time, to the Baronage, and in the Baronage the nation reposed an unwavering trust. The nobles of England were no longer the brutal foreigners from whose violence the strong hand of the Norman sovereign had been

1290 to 1327

needed to protect their subjects; they were as English as the peasant or the trader. They had won English liberty by their swords, and the popular trust in their fidelity to its cause was justified by the tradition of their order, which bound them to look on themselves as its natural guardians. Quietly, therefore, and by a natural process of political development, the problem which Earl Simon had first dared to face, how to ensure the government of the realm in accordance with the Charter, was solved as Simon had solved it, by the transfer of the business of administration into the hands of a standing committee of the greater prelates and barons, acting as the chief officers of state under the name of the Continual Council. The quiet government of the kingdom by this body in the interval between the death of Henry the Third and the return of Edward the First, if we contrast it with the disorders which had previously followed a king's decease, proves that the Crown was no longer the real depositary of political power. In the brief indeed which announced Edward's accession the Council asserted the crown to have devolved on the new monarch "by the will of the peers." At an earlier time the personal greatness of Edward might have redressed the balance, but the character of his legislation, as we have traced it in a former page, and especially the oligarchical character of his land laws, shows the influence of the Baronage to have remained practically supreme. The very form indeed of the new Parliament, in which the barons were backed by the knights of the shire, elected for the most part under their influence, and by the representatives of the towns, still true to the traditions of the Barons' war; the increased frequency of these Parliamentary assemblies which gave opportunity for counsel, for party organization, and a distinct political base of action; above all, the new financial power which their control over taxation enabled them to exert on the throne, placed the rule of the nobles on a basis too strong to be shaken by the utmost efforts of even Edward himself.

Edward and the Baronage

From the very outset of his reign the King struggled fruitlessly against this overpowering influence. He was the last man to be content with a crown held "at the will of the peers," and his sympathies must have been stirred by the revolution on the other side the Channel, where the successors of St. Lewis were crushing the power of the feudal Baronage and erecting a royal despotism on its ruins. He at once copied the French monarchs by issuing writs of "quo warranto," which required every noble to produce his titles to his estates. But the attack was roughly met. Earl Warrenne bared a rusty sword, and flung it on the commissioners' table. "This, sirs," said he, "is my title-deed. By the sword my fathers won their lands when they came over with the Conqueror, and by my sword I will hold them." The King dealt a harder blow at the Baronage in his rigorous enforcement of public order. Different as the English nobles were from the feudal noblesse of Germany and France, there is in every military class a tendency to outrage and

violence, which even the stern justice of Edward found it difficult to repress. Great earls, such as those of Gloucester and Hereford, carried on private war along the Welsh marches; in Shropshire, the Earl of Arundel waged his feud with Fulk Fitz Warine. To the lesser nobles the wealth of the trader, the long wain of goods as it passed along the highway, was a tempting prey. Once, under cover of a mock tournament of monks against canons, a band of country gentlemen succeeded in introducing themselves into the great merchant fair at Boston; at nightfall every booth was on fire, the merchants robbed and slaughtered, and the booty carried off to ships which lay ready at the quay. Streams of gold and silver, ran the tale of popular horror, flowed melted down the gutters to the sea; "all the money in England could hardly make good the loss." At the close of Edward's reign lawless bands of "trail-bastons," or club-men, maintained themselves by general outrage, aided the country nobles in their feuds, and wrested money and goods by threats from the great tradesmen. The King was strong enough to fine and imprison the Earls, to hang the chief of the Boston marauders, and to suppress the outlaws by rigorous commissions. But he had struck from his hands, by two widely different measures, his chief resources for a struggle with the Barons when the Scotch war suddenly placed him at their mercy. 1290 to 1327

It was by the support of the lawyer class, by its hatred of the noblesse, by its introduction of the civil law and the doctrine of a royal despotism, that the French Kings had trampled feudalism under foot. In England so perfect was the national union, that the very judges were themselves necessarily drawn from the body of the lesser Baronage. It was probably their uselessness for any purposes of royal aggression, quite as much as their personal corruption, which Edward suddenly punished by a clean sweep of the bench. The Chief Justiciary was banished from the realm, and his colleagues imprisoned and fined. While his justice thus robbed him of the weapon of the law, fanaticism robbed him of the financial resource which had so often enabled his predecessors to confront their people. Under the Angevins the popular hatred of the Jews had grown rapidly in intensity. But the royal protection had never wavered. Henry the Second had granted them the right of burial outside of every city where they dwelt. Richard had punished heavily a massacre of the Jews at York, and he organized a mixed court of Jews and Christians for the registration of their contracts. John suffered none to plunder them save himself, though he once wrested from them a sum equal to a year's revenue of his realm. But the very troubles of the time brought in a harvest greater than even the royal greed could reap; the Jews grew wealthy enough to acquire estates, and only a burst of popular feeling prevented a legal decision which would have enabled them to own freeholds, and rise to an equal citizenship with their Christian neighbours. Their pride and contempt of the superstitions around them broke out in the taunts they levelled at processions as they passed their

The Judges and the Jews

1290

1290 to 1327

Jewries, sometimes as at Oxford in actual attacks upon them. Wild stories floated about among the people of children carried off to Jewish houses, to be circumcized and crucified, and a boy of Lincoln who was found slain in a Jewish house was canonized by popular reverence as "S. Hugh." Fanaticism met fanaticism, and the first work of the Friars was to settle in the Hebrew quarters and establish their convent-houses. But the tide of popular fury was rising too fast for these gentler means of reconciliation. When the Franciscans saved seventy Jews from death by their prayers to the King the populace angrily refused the brethren alms. The sack of Jewry after Jewry was the sign of popular triumph during the Barons' war. With its close, fell on the Jews the more terrible persecution of the law. Statute after statute hemmed them in. They were forbidden to hold real property, to employ Christian servants, to move through the streets without the coloured tablet of wool on their breast which distinguished their race. They were prohibited from building new synagogues, or eating with Christians, or acting as physicians to them. Their trade, already crippled by

1290

the rivalry of the bankers of Cahors, was annihilated by a royal order, which bade them renounce usury under pain of death. At last persecution could do no more, and on the eve of his struggle with Scotland, Edward, eager for popular favour, and himself swayed by the fanaticism of his subjects, ended the long agony of the Jews by their expulsion from the realm. Of the sixteen thousand who preferred exile to apostasy few reached the shores of France. Many were wrecked, others robbed and flung overboard. One ship-master turned out a crew of wealthy merchants on to a sandbank, and bade them call a new Moses to save them from the sea. From the time of Edward to that of Cromwell no Jew touched English ground.

Edward I. and the Baronage

No share in the enormities which accompanied the expulsion of the Jews can fall upon Edward, for he not only suffered the fugitives to take their wealth with them, but punished with the halter those who plundered them at sea. But the expulsion was none the less a crime, and a crime for which punishment was quick to follow. The grant of a fifteenth made by the grateful Parliament proved but a poor substitute for the loss which the royal treasury had sustained. The demands of the Scotch war grew heavier day by day, and they were soon aggravated by the yet greater expenses of the French war which it entailed. It was sheer want which drove Edward to tyrannous extortion. His first blow fell on the Church; he demanded half their annual income from the clergy, and so terrible was his wrath at their resistance, that the Dean of S. Paul's, who had stood forth to remonstrate, dropped dead of sheer terror at his feet. "If any oppose the King's demand," said a royal envoy, in the midst of the Convocation, "let him stand up that he may be noted as an enemy to the King's peace." The outraged churchmen fell back on an untenable plea that their aid was due solely to Rome, and pleaded a bull of exemption, granted by

Pope Boniface VIII., as a ground for refusing to comply with further taxation. Edward met their refusal by a general outlawry of the whole order. The King's courts were closed, and all justice denied to those who refused the King aid. The clergy had, in fact, put themselves in the wrong, and the outlawry soon forced them to submission, but their aid did little to recruit the exhausted treasury, while the pressure of the war steadily increased. Far wider measures of arbitrary taxation were needful to equip an expedition which Edward prepared to lead in person to Flanders. The country gentlemen were compelled to take up knighthood, or to compound for exemption from the burthensome honour. Forced contributions of cattle and corn were demanded from the counties, and the export duty on wool—now the staple produce of the country—was raised to six times its former amount. The work of the Great Charter and the Barons' war seemed suddenly to have been undone, but the blow had no sooner been struck than Edward found himself powerless within his realm. The Baronage roused itself to resistance, and the two greatest of the English nobles, Bohun, Earl of Hereford, and Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, placed themselves at the head of the opposition. Their feudal tenures did not bind them to foreign service, and their protest against the war and the financial measures by which it was carried on, took the practical form of a refusal to follow Edward to Flanders. "By God, Sir Earl," swore the King to Bigod, "you shall either go or hang!" "By God, Sir King," was the cool reply, "I will neither go nor hang!" Ere the Parliament he had convened could meet, Edward had discovered his own powerlessness, and, with one of those sudden revulsions of feeling of which his nature was capable, he stood before his people in Westminster Hall and owned, with a burst of tears, that he had taken their substance without due warrant of law. His passionate appeal to their loyalty wrested a reluctant assent to the prosecution of the war, but the crisis had taught the need of further securities against the royal power, and while Edward was still struggling in Flanders the Church and the Baronage drew together in their old alliance. The Primate, Winchelsey, joined the two Earls and the citizens of London in forbidding any further levy of supplies, and in summoning a new Parliament, in which the Charter was not only confirmed but new articles were added to it, prohibiting the King from raising taxes save by general consent of the realm. Edward hurried back from Flanders, but his struggles to evade a public ratification of the charter, his attempt to add an evasive clause saving the right of the Crown, and the secret brief which he procured from the Papacy annulling the statute altogether, only proved the bitterness of his humiliation. A direct threat of rebellion forced him to swear compliance with its provisions, and four years later a fresh gathering of the Barons in arms wrested from him the full execution of the Charter of Forests. The successes gained over Scotland at the close of Edward's reign seemed for a moment to restore vigour to the royal

1290 to 1327 — 1298

1297

1302

1290 to 1327 authority; but the fatal struggle revived in the rising of Robert Bruce, and the King's death bequeathed the contest to his worthless son.

The Lords Ordainers

Worthless, however, as Edward the Second morally might be, he was far from being destitute of the intellectual power which seemed hereditary in the Plantagenets. It was his settled purpose to fling off the yoke of the Baronage, and the means by which he designed accomplishing his purpose was a Ministry wholly dependent on the Crown. We have already noticed the change by which the "clerks of the king's chapel," who had been the ministers of arbitrary government under the Normans and Angevins, had been quietly superseded by the prelates and lords of the Continual Council. At the close of his father's reign, a direct demand on the part of the Barons to nominate the great officers of state had been curtly rejected; but the royal choice had been practically limited in the selection of its ministers to the class of prelates and nobles, and, however closely connected with royalty, such officers always to a great extent shared the feelings and opinions of their order. It was the aim of the young King to undo the change which had been silently brought about, and to imitate the policy of the contemporary sovereigns of France by choosing as his ministers men of an inferior position, wholly dependent on the Crown for their power, and representatives of nothing but the policy and interests of their master. Piers Gaveston, a foreigner sprung from a family of Guienne, had been his friend and companion during his father's reign, at the close of which he had been banished from the realm for his share in intrigues which had divided Edward from his son. At the opening of the new reign he was at once recalled, created
1307 Earl of Cornwall, and placed at the head of the administration. Gay, genial, thriftless, Gaveston showed in his first acts the quickness and audacity of Southern Gaul; the older ministers were dismissed, all claims of precedence or inheritance set aside in the distribution of offices at the coronation, while taunts and defiances goaded the proud Baronage to fury. The favourite was a fine soldier, and his lance unhorsed his opponents in tourney after tourney. His reckless wit flung nicknames about the Court, the Earl of Lancaster was "the Actor," Pembroke "the Jew," Warwick "the Black Dog." But taunt and defiance broke helplessly against the iron mass of the Baronage. After a few months of power the formal demand of the Parliament for his dismissal could not be resisted, and his exile was followed by the refusal of a grant
1308 of supply till redress had been granted for the grievances of which the Commons complained. The great principle on which the whole of our constitutional history really hangs, that the redress of grievances should precede the grant of aid to the Crown, was established by Edward's reluctant assent to the demand of the Parliament, and the great concession purchased Gaveston's return. His policy, however, was the same as before, and in a few months the Barons were again in arms. The administrative revolution of the

King was met by the revival of the bold measures of Earl Simon, and the appointment in full Parliament of a standing Committee of bishops, earls, and barons, for the government of the realm during the coming year. A formidable list of "Articles of Reform" drawn up by these "Lords Ordainers" met Edward on his return from a fruitless warfare with the Scots, the most important of which related to the constitution of the executive power. Parliaments were to be holden at least once a year; the consent of the Baronage assembled in them was required for a declaration of war or the King's departure from the realm, for the choice of all the great officers of the Crown and of the wardens of the royal castles, while that of the sheriffs was left to the Continual Council whom they nominated. The demand was in fact one for a transfer of the King's authority into the hands of the Baronage, for the part of the Commons in Parliament was still confined to the presentation of petitions of grievances and the grant of money, and it was only after a long and obstinate struggle that Edward was forced to comply. The exile of Gaveston was the sign of the Barons' triumph: his return a few months later renewed a strife which was only ended by his capture in Scarborough. The "Black Dog" of Warwick had sworn that the favourite should feel his teeth; and Gaveston, who flung himself in vain at the feet of the Earl of Lancaster, praying for pity "from his gentle lord," was beheaded in defiance of the terms of his capitulation on Blacklow Hill. The King's burst of grief was as fruitless as his threats of vengeance; a feigned submission of the conquerors completed the royal humiliation, and the Barons knelt before Edward in Westminster Hall to receive a pardon which seemed the deathblow of the royal power. But if Edward was powerless to conquer the Baronage he could still, by evading the observances of the Ordinances, throw the whole realm into confusion. The six years that follow Gaveston's death are among the darkest in our history. A horrible succession of famines intensified the suffering which sprang from the utter absence of all rule during the dissension between the Barons and the King. The overthrow of Bannockburn, and the ravages of the Scots in the North, brought shame on England such as it had never known. At last the capture of Berwick by Robert Bruce forced Edward partially to give way, the Ordinances were formally accepted, an amnesty granted, and a small number of peers belonging to the Barons' party added to the great officers of state.

1230 to 1307

1310

1312

1313

The character of the Earl of Lancaster, who, by the union of the four earldoms of Lincoln, Leicester, Salisbury, and Derby with his own, as well as by his royal blood (for like the King he was a grandson of Henry the Third), stood at the head of the English baronage, and whom the issue of the long struggle with Edward raised for the moment to supreme power in the realm, seems to have fallen far beneath the greatness of his position. Incapable of governing, he could do little but regard with jealousy the new favourite, originally one of his own dependants, whom Edward adopted. The rise of

Edward II.

1230 to 1327 Hugh Le Despenser, on whom the King bestowed the county of Glamorgan with the hand of its heiress, was rapid enough to excite general jealousy, and Lancaster found little difficulty in extorting by force of arms his exile from the kingdom. But the tide of popular sympathy, already wavering, was turned to the royal cause by an insult offered to the Queen, against whom Lady Badlesmere had closed the doors of her castle of Ledes, and the unexpected energy shown by Edward in avenging the insult gave fresh strength to his cause. He found himself strong enough to recall Despenser, and when Lancaster convoked the Baronage to force him again into exile, the weakness of his party was shown by the treasonable negotiations into which he entered with the Scots, and by his precipitate retreat to the North on the advance of the royal army. At Boroughbridge however his forces were arrested and dispersed, and the Earl himself, brought captive before Edward
1321 at Pontefract, was ordered instantly to death as a traitor. "Have mercy on me, King of Heaven," cried Lancaster, as mounted on a grey pony without a bridle he was hurried to execution, "for my earthly King has forsaken me." His death was followed by that of a crowd of his adherents and by the captivity of the rest; while a Parliament of York annulled the proceedings against Despenser, and repealed the greater part of the Ordinances. It is to this Parliament however, and perhaps to the victorious confidence of the royalists, that we owe the famous provision that all laws concerning "the estate of the Crown or of the realm and people must be treated, accorded, and established in Parliament by the King, by and with the consent of the prelates, earls, barons, and universality of the realm." There can be little doubt from the tenor of this remarkable enactment that much of the sudden revulsion of popular feeling had been owing to the assumption of all legislative action by the Baronage alone. But the arrogance of Despenser, the utter failure of a fresh campaign against Scotland, and the humiliating truce for fourteen years which Edward was forced to conclude with Robert Bruce, soon robbed the Crown of its temporary popularity, while Edward's domestic vices brought about the sudden catastrophe which closed his disastrous reign. It had been arranged that the Queen, a sister of the King of France, should revisit her home to conclude a treaty between the two kingdoms, whose quarrel was again verging upon war, and her son, a boy of twelve years old, followed her to do homage in his father's stead for the duchy of Guienne. Neither threats nor prayers, however, could induce either wife or child to return, and the Queen's connection with the secret conspiracy of the Baronage was revealed when the primate and nobles hurried to her standard on her landing at Orwell. Deserted by all and repulsed by the citizens of London, whose aid he had implored, the King fled hastily to the Marches of Wales and embarked with his favourite for Lundy Isle, but contrary winds flung the fugitives again on the Welsh coast, where they fell into the hands of the new Earl of Lancaster. Des-

penser was at once hung on a gibbet fifty feet high, and the King placed in ward at Kenilworth till his fate could be decided by a Parliament summoned for that purpose at Westminster. The peers assembled fearlessly revived the constitutional usage of the earlier English freedom, and asserted their right to depose a king who had proved himself unworthy to rule. Not a voice was raised in Edward's behalf, and only four prelates protested when the young Prince was proclaimed King by acclamation, and presented as their sovereign to the multitudes without. The revolution soon took legal form in a bill which charged the captive monarch with indolence, incapacity, the loss of Scotland, the violation of his coronation oath, and oppression of the Church and Baronage; and on the approval of this it was resolved that the reign of Edward of Caernarvon had ceased and that the crown had passed to his son, Edward of Windsor. A deputation of the Parliament proceeded to Kenilworth to procure the assent of the discrowned King to his own deposition, and Edward, "clad in a plain black gown," submitted quietly to his fate. Sir William Trussel at once addressed him in words which better than any other mark the true nature of the step which the Parliament had taken. "I, William Trussel, proctor of the earls, barons, and others, having for this full and sufficient power, do render and give back to you, Edward, once King of England, the homage and fealty of the persons named in my procuracy; and acquit and discharge them thereof in the best manner that law and custom will give. And I now make protestation in their name that they will no longer be in your fealty and allegiance, nor claim to hold anything of you as king, but will account you hereafter as a private person, without any manner of royal dignity." A significant act followed these emphatic words. Sir Thomas Blount, the steward of the household, broke his staff of office, a ceremony only used at a king's death, and declared that all persons engaged in the royal service were discharged. 1290 to 1327 1327

Green's account of the confirmation of the charters should be revised in the light of more recent research; compare Stubbs, "Constitutional History."

Section VI.—The Scotch War of Independence, 1306—1342

[*Authorities.*—To those already mentioned must be added Geoffrey le Baker, "Chronicon" (Rolls Series), and the "Chronicon Angliæ" (Rolls Series), which, however, does not become really important until 1376. Hume Brown, "History of Scotland," contains the best modern account of the period.]

To obtain a clear view of the constitutional struggle between the kings and their baronage, we have deferred to its close an account of the great contest which raged throughout the whole period in the North. The Scotch Revolt

With the Convention of Perth the conquest and settlement of 1305

1306 to 1342 Scotland seemed complete. Edward, in fact, was preparing for a joint Parliament of the two nations at Carlisle, when the conquered country suddenly sprung again to arms under Robert Bruce, the grandson of one of the original claimants of the crown. The Norman house of Bruce formed a part of the Yorkshire baronage, but it had acquired through intermarriages the Earldom of Carrick and the Lordship of Annandale. Both the claimant and his son had been pretty steadily on the English side in the contest with Balliol and Wallace, and Robert had himself been trained in the English Court, and stood high in the King's favour. But the withdrawal of Balliol gave a new force to his claims upon the crown, and the discovery
1306 of an intrigue which he had set on foot with the Bishop of St. Andrews so roused Edward's jealousy that Bruce fled for his life across the border. In the church of the Grey Friars at Dumfries he met Comyn, the Lord of Badenoch, to whose treachery he attributed the disclosure of his plans, and after the interchange of a few hot words struck him with his dagger to the ground. It was an outrage that admitted of no forgiveness, and Bruce for very safety was forced to assume the crown six weeks after in the Abbey of Scone. The news roused Scotland again to arms, and summoned Edward to a fresh contest with his unconquerable foe. But the murder of Comyn had changed the King's mood to a terrible pitilessness; he threatened death against all concerned in the outrage, and exposed the Countess of Buchan, who had set the crown on Bruce's head, in a cage or open chamber built for the purpose in one of the towers of Berwick. At the solemn feast which celebrated his son's knighthood Edward vowed on the swan, which formed the chief dish at the banquet, to devote the rest of his days to exact vengeance from the murderer himself. But even at the moment of the vow, Bruce was already flying for his life to the Highlands. "Henceforth," he had said to his wife at their coronation, "thou art queen of Scotland and I king." "I fear," replied Mary Bruce, "we are only playing at royalty, like children in their games." The play was soon turned into bitter earnest. A small English force under Aymer de Valence sufficed to rout the disorderly levies which gathered round the new monarch, and the flight of Bruce left his followers at Edward's mercy. Noble after noble was hurried to the block. The Earl of Athole pleaded kindred with royalty; "His only privilege," burst forth the King, "shall be that of being hanged on a higher gallows than the rest." Knights and priests were strung up side by side by the English justiciaries; while the wife and daughters of Robert himself were flung into Edward's prisons. Bruce himself had offered to capitulate to Prince Edward, but the offer only roused the old King to fury. "Who is so bold,"
1307 he cried, "as to treat with our traitors without our knowledge?" and rising from his sick-bed he led his army northwards to complete the conquest. But the hand of death was upon him, and in the very sight of Scotland the old man breathed his last at Burgh-upon-Sands.

The abandonment of his great enterprise by Edward the Second, and the troubles which soon arose between the King and the English barons, were far at first from restoring the fortunes of Robert Bruce. The Earl of Pembroke was still master of the open country, and the Highland chiefs of the West, amongst whom the new king was driven to seek for shelter, were bitterly hostile to the sovereign of the Lowland Scots. For four years Bruce's career was that of a desperate adventurer; but it was adversity which transformed the reckless murderer of Comyn into the noble leader of a nation's cause. Strong and of commanding presence, brave and genial in temper, Bruce bore the hardships of his career with a courage and hopefulness which never failed. In the legends which clustered round his name we see him listening in Highland glens to the bay of the bloodhounds on his track, or holding single-handed a pass against a crowd of savage clansmen. Sometimes the little band of fugitives were forced to support themselves by hunting or fishing, sometimes to break up for safety as their enemies tracked them to their lair. Bruce himself had more than once to fling off his shirt of mail and scramble barefoot for his very life up the crags. Little by little, however, the dark sky cleared. The English pressure relaxed as the struggle between Edward and his barons grew fiercer. James Douglas, the darling of Scotch story, was the first of the Lowland barons to rally again to the Bruce, and his daring gave heart to the royal cause. Once he surprised his own house, which had been given to an Englishman, ate the dinner which had been prepared for its new owner, slew his captives, and tossed their bodies on to a pile of wood gathered at the castle gate. Then he staved in the wine-vats that the wine might mingle with their blood, and set house and woodpile on fire. A terrible ferocity mingled with heroism in the work of freedom, but the work went steadily on. Bruce's "harrying of Buchan" after his defeat of its Earl, who had joined the English in the North, at last fairly turned the tide of success. Edinburgh, Roxburgh, Perth, and most of the Scotch fortresses fell one by one into the King's hands. The clergy met in council and owned Bruce as their lawful lord. Gradually the Scotch barons who still held to the English cause were coerced into submission, and Bruce found himself strong enough to invest Stirling, the last and the most important of the Scotch fortresses which held out for Edward.

1306 to 1342 — Robert Bruce

1313

Stirling was in fact the key of Scotland, and its danger roused England out of its civil strife to a vast effort for the recovery of its prey. Thirty thousand horsemen formed the fighting part of the great army which followed Edward to the North, and a host of wild marauders had been summoned from Ireland and Wales to its support. The army which Bruce had gathered to oppose the inroad was formed almost wholly of footmen, and was stationed to the south of Stirling on a rising ground flanked by a little brook, the Bannock burn which gave its name to the engagement. Again the two systems of warfare, the feudal and the free, were brought face

Bannockburn, June 24, 1314

1306 to 1342

to face, as they had been brought at Falkirk, and the King, like Wallace, drew up his force in solid squares or circles of spearmen. The English were dispirited at the very outset by the failure of an attempt to relieve Stirling, and by the issue of a single combat between Bruce and Henry de Bohun, a knight who had borne down upon him as he was riding peacefully along the front of his army. Robert was mounted on a small hackney and held only a light battle-axe in his hand, but, warding off his opponent's spear, he cleft his skull with so terrible a blow that the handle of the axe was shattered in his grasp. At the opening of the battle the English archers were thrown forward to rake the Scottish squares, but they were without support and were easily dispersed by a handful of horse whom Bruce had held in reserve for the purpose. The great body of men-at-arms next flung themselves on the Scottish front, but their charge was embarrassed by the narrow space along which the line was forced to move, and the steady resistance of the squares soon threw the knighthood into disorder. "The horses that were stickit," says an exulting Scotch writer, "rushed and reeled right rudely." In the moment of failure the sight of a body of camp-followers, whom they mistook for reinforcements to the enemy, spread panic through the English host. It broke in a headlong rout. The thousands of brilliant horsemen were soon floundering in pits which had guarded the level ground to Bruce's left, or riding in wild haste for the border. Few however were fortunate enough to reach it. Edward himself, with a body of five hundred knights, succeeded in escaping to Dunbar and the sea. But the flower of his knighthood fell into the hands of the victors, while the Irishry and the footmen were ruthlessly cut down by the country folk as they fled. For centuries after, the rich plunder of the English camp left its traces on the treasure and vestment rolls of castle and abbey.

The Independence of Scotland

Terrible as was the blow it was long before England could relinquish her claim on the Scottish crown. With equal pertinacity Bruce refused all negotiation while the royal title was refused to him, and steadily pushed on the recovery of the South. Berwick was at last forced to surrender, and held against a desperate attempt at its recapture; while barbarous forays of the borderers under Douglas wasted Northumberland. Again the strife between the Crown and the Baronage was suspended to allow the march of a great English army to the North, but Bruce declined an engagement till the wasted Lowlands starved the invaders into a ruinous retreat. The blow wrested from England a truce for thirteen

1323

years, in the negotiation of which Bruce was suffered to take the royal title, but the deposition of Edward II. gave a fresh impulse to the ambition of the English baronage, and Edward Balliol, the son of the former King, was solemnly received at the English Court. Robert was now on his death-bed, but the insult roused him to hurl his marauders again over the border under Douglas and Randolph. Froissart paints for us the Scotch army as it appeared in this memorable campaign. "It consisted of four thousand

men-at-arms, knights and esquires, well mounted, besides twenty thousand men bold and hardy, armed after the manner of their country, and mounted upon little hackneys that are never tied up or dressed, but turned immediately after the day's march to pasture on the heath or in the fields. . . . They bring no carriages with them on account of the mountains they have to pass in Northumberland, neither do they carry with them any provisions of bread or wine, for their habits of sobriety are such in time of war that they will live for a long time on flesh half-sodden without bread, and drink the river water without wine. They have therefore no occasion for pots or pans, for they dress the flesh of the cattle in their skins after they have flayed them, and being sure to find plenty of them in the country which they invade, they carry none with them. Under the flaps of his saddle each man carries a broad piece of metal, behind him a little bag of oatmeal: when they have eaten too much of the sodden flesh and their stomach appears weak and empty, they set this plate over the fire, knead the meal with water, and when the plate is hot put a little of the paste upon it and a thin cake like a biscuit which they eat to warm their stomachs. It is therefore no wonder that they perform a longer day's march than other soldiers." Against such a foe the heavy-armed knighthood of the English army, which marched under its boy-king to protect the border, was utterly helpless. At one time the army lost its way in the vast border waste; at another all traces of the enemy had disappeared, and an offer of knighthood and a hundred marks was made to any who could tell where the Scotch were encamped. But when found their position behind the Wear proved unassailable, and after a bold sally on the English camp Douglas foiled an attempt at blockading him by a clever retreat. The English levies broke hopelessly up, and a fresh foray on Northumberland forced the English Court to submit to peace. By the Treaty of Northampton the independence of Scotland was formally recognized, and Bruce acknowledged as its king.

1306 to 1342

1328

The pride of England, however, had been too much aroused by the struggle to bear easily its defeat. The first result of the treaty was the overthrow of the Government which concluded it, a result hastened by the pride of its head, Roger Mortimer, and by his exclusion of the rest of the nobles from all share in the administration of the realm. The first efforts of the Baronage were unsuccessful: the Earl of Lancaster, who had risen in revolt, was forced to submission; and the King's uncle, the Earl of Kent, was actually brought to the block, before the young King himself interfered in the struggle. Entering the Council chamber in Nottingham Castle, with a force which he had introduced through a secret passage in the rock on which it stands, Edward arrested Mortimer with his own hands, hurried him to execution, and assumed the control of affairs. His first care was to restore good order throughout the country, which under the late Government had fallen into ruin, and to free his hands by a peace with France for the troubles

Scotland and Edward III.

1330

1306 to 1342 which were again impending in the north. Fortune, indeed, seemed at last to have veered to the English side; the death of Bruce only a year after the Treaty of Northampton left the Scottish throne to a child of seven years old, and the internal difficulties of the realm broke out in civil strife. To the great barons on either side the border the late peace involved serious losses, for many of the Scotch houses held large estates in England, as many of the English lords held large estates in Scotland; and although the treaty had provided for their claims, they had in each case been practically set aside. It is this discontent of the barons at the new

1332 settlement which explains the sudden success of Edward Balliol in his snatch at the Scottish throne. In spite of King Edward's prohibition, he sailed from England at the head of a body of nobles who claimed estates in the north, landed on the shores of Fife, and, after repulsing with immense loss an army which attacked him near Perth, was crowned at Scone while David Bruce fled helplessly to France. Edward had given no aid to the enterprise, but the crisis tempted his ambition, and he demanded and obtained from Balliol an acknowledgment of the abandoned suzerainty. The acknowledgment, however, was fatal to Balliol himself. He was at once driven from his realm, and Berwick, which he had agreed to surrender, was strongly garrisoned. The town was soon besieged,

1333 but a Scotch army under the regent Douglas, brother to the famous Sir James, advanced to its relief, and attacked the covering force, which was encamped on the strong position of Halidon Hill. The English bowmen, however, vindicated the fame they had first won at Falkirk, and were soon to crown in the victory of Cressy; and the Scotch only struggled through the marsh which covered the English front to be riddled with a storm of arrows, and to break in utter rout. The battle decided the fate of Berwick, and from that time the town remained the one part of Edward's conquests which was preserved by the English crown. Fragment as it was, it was viewed legally as representing the realm of which it had once formed a part. As Scotland, it had its chancellor, chamberlain, and other officers of State; and the peculiar heading of Acts of Parliament enacted for England "and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed" still preserves the memory of its peculiar position. Balliol was restored to his throne by the conquerors, and his formal cession of the Lowlands to England rewarded their aid. During the next three years Edward persisted in the line of policy he had adopted, retaining his hold over Southern Scotland, and aiding his sub-king Balliol in campaign after campaign against the despairing efforts of the Douglases and other nobles who still adhered to the house of Bruce. His perseverance was all but crowned with success, when the outbreak of war with France saved Scotland by drawing the strength of England across the Channel. The patriot party drew again together. Balliol found himself at last without an adherent and withdrew to the Court of Edward, while David returned to his kingdom, and won back the chief fastnesses of the

Lowlands. The freedom of Scotland was, in fact, secured. From a war of conquest and patriotic resistance the struggle died into a petty strife between two angry neighbours, which became a mere episode in the larger contest between England and France. 1306 to 1342 — 1339

The account in the text of Edward III.'s policy towards Scotland requires some revision. By the Treaty of Roxburgh (1332), Edward Balliol acknowledged English suzerainty; by that of Newcastle (1334), he ceded the south-east of Scotland to Edward III. Eventually, Edward came to terms with David Bruce by the treaty of Berwick (1357), by which the Scottish king was released and restored to his throne, Berwick being finally ceded to England.

CHAPTER V

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

1336—1431

SECTION I.—EDWARD THE THIRD, 1336—1360

[*Authorities.*—The chronicle of Hemingburgh is continued by an unknown author to the eve of the battle of Cressy. Other important authorities for the first part of Edward III.'s reign are Murimuth, Robert of Avesbury, Geoffrey le Baker (the first part of whose chronicle was originally known as "Thomas de la Moor"), Knighton, and the "Eulogium Historiarum" (all in the Rolls Series). The Chroniclers of St. Alban's and the "Polychronicon" may also be mentioned. For the Hundred Years' War, the most famous authority is, of course, Froissart. He was at first attached to the English court, and the earliest version of his work has an English bias; the second and third versions were composed under French influence. As a history, his writings are of no particular value. The best edition is that published for the Société de l'Histoire de France. Froissart made use of Jean le Bel, "Chroniques," which supplies the best authority for the war. Various other French chronicles are of value. Among modern authorities may be mentioned Mackinnon's "History of Edward III." and Déprez, "Préliminaires de la Guerre de Cent Ans." The best edition of the works of Chaucer is that of Skeat; for the general literary history of the period, see Jusserand.]

England under Edward III.

IN the middle of the fourteenth century the great movement towards freedom and unity which had begun under the last of the Norman Kings seemed to have reached its end, and the perfect fusion of conquered and conquerors into an English people was marked by the disuse, even amongst the nobler classes, of the French tongue. In spite of the efforts of the grammar schools, and of the strength of fashion, English was winning its way throughout the reign of Edward the Third to its final triumph in that of his grandson. "Children in school," says a writer of the earlier reign, "against the usage and manner of all other nations, be compelled for to leave their own language, and for to construe their lessons and their things in French, and so they have since Normans first came into England. Also gentlemen's children be taught to speak French from the time that they be rocked in their cradle, and know how to speak and play with a child's toy; and uplandish (or country) men will liken themselves to gentlemen, and fondell (or delight) with great busyness for to speak French to be told of." "This manner," adds a translator of Richard's time, "was much used before the first murrain (the plague of 1349), and is since somewhat changed; for John Cornewaile, a master of grammar, changed the lore in grammar school and construing from French into English; and Richard Pencriche learned this manner of teaching of him, as others did of Pencriche. So that now, the year of our Lord, 1385, and of

FRANCE
AT THE TREATY OF
BRETIGNY (CALAIS)
English Miles
0 50 100 150
Longitude East of Greenwich
0
5
50
45
Flanders
Picardy
Normandy
Champagne
Brittany
Maine
Orleanois
Anjou
Touraine
Burgundy
Poitou
Bourbonnois
Marche
Limosin
Auvergne
Dauphin
Quercy
GUIENNE
Gascony
Armagnac
Languedoc
Provence
Navarre
Aragon
SPAIN
THE EMPIRE
SAVOY
Paris
Rouen
Calais
Boulogne
Amiens
Guernsey
Jersey
Dreux
Chartres
Bretigny
Orleans
Mans
Angers
Nantes
Blois
Tours
Poitiers
Charenis
Saintes
Angoulene
Perigord
Bourdeaux
Agen
Bayonne
Tarbes
Toulouse
Narbonne
Perpignan
Nismes
Montpelier
Arles
Avignon
Marseille
Lyons
Geneva
Besançon
Verdun
Toul
Rheims
Chalons
Arras
Bruges
R. Seine
R. Loire
R. Vienne
R. Charente
R. Dordogne
R. Lot
R. Garonne
R. Gascogne
R. Rhone
R. Durance
R. Allier
R. Saone

the second King Richard after the conquest nine, in all the grammar schools of England children leaveth French, and construeth and learneth in English." A more formal note of the change thus indicated is found in the Statute of 1362, which orders English to be used in the pleadings of courts of law, because "the French tongue is much unknown." The tendency to a general use of the national tongue told powerfully on literature. The influence of the French romances had everywhere tended to make French the one literary language at the opening of the fourteenth century, and in England this influence had been backed by the French tone of the court of Henry the Third and the three Edwards. But at the close of the reign of Edward the Third the long French romances were translated even for knightly hearers. "Let clerks indite in Latin," says the author of the "Testament of Love," "and let Frenchmen in their French also indite their quaint terms, for it is kindly to their mouths; and let us show our fantasies in such wordes as we learned of our mother's tongue." The new national life afforded nobler material than "fantasies" for English literature. With the completion of the work of national unity had come the completion of the work of national freedom. Under the first Edward the Parliament had vindicated its right to the control of taxation, under the second it had advanced from the removal of ministers to the deposition of a King, under the third it gave its voice on questions of peace and war, controlled expenditure, and regulated the course of civil administration. The vigour of English life showed itself socially in the wide extension of commerce; in the rapid growth of the woollen manufactures after the settlement of Flemish weavers on the eastern coast; in the progress of the towns, fresh as they were from the victory of the craft-guilds; and in the development of agriculture through the rise of the tenant-farmer. It gave nobler signs of its activity in the spirit of national independence and moral earnestness which awoke at the call of Wyclif. New forces of thought and feeling, which were destined to tell on every age of our later history, broke their way through the crust of feudalism in the socialist revolt of the Lollards, and a sudden burst of military glory threw its glamour over the age of Cressy and Poitiers. 1336 to 1360

It is this new gladness of a great people which utters itself in the verse of Geoffrey Chaucer. In spite of a thousand conjectures, we know little of the life of our first great poet. From his own statement we gather that he was born about the middle of the fourteenth century. His death must have taken place about the year of its close. His family, though not noble, seems to have been of some importance, for, from the opening of his career, we find Chaucer in close connexion with the Court. He first bore arms in the campaign of 1359, but he was luckless enough to be made prisoner; and from the time of his release after the treaty of Bretigny he took no further share in the military enterprises of his time. If he married a sister of the famous Katherine Swynford, the mistress, and at a later time the wife of John of Gaunt, the match would ally him to Chaucer 1340? to 1400?

1336 to 1360

the Duke of Lancaster; it was as his adherent that he sate in the Parliament of 1386, and to his patronage that he owed a petty office in the Customs and an appointment as clerk of the Royal Works. A mission, which was probably connected with the financial straits of the Crown, carried him in early life to Italy. He visited Genoa and the brilliant court of the Visconti at Milan; at Florence, where the memory of Dante, the "great master," whom he commemorates so reverently in his verse, was still living, he may have met Boccaccio; at Padua, like his own clerk of Oxenford, he may have caught the story of Griseldis from the lips of Petrarca. But with these few facts and guesses our knowledge of him ends. In person, the portrait of Occleve, which preserves for us his forked beard, his dark-coloured dress and hood, the knife and pen-case at his girdle, is supplemented by a few vivid touches of his own. The Host in the "Canterbury Tales" describes him as one who looked on the ground as though he would find a hare, as elf-like in face, but portly of waist. He heard little of his neighbours' talk; when labour was over "thou goest home to thine own house anon, and also dumb as a stone thou sittest at another book till fully dazed is thy look, and livest thus as an hermite, although thy abstinence is lite (little)." But of this abstraction from his fellows there is no trace in his verse. No poetry was ever more human than Chaucer's; none ever came more frankly and genially home to its readers. The first note of his song is a note of freshness and gladness. "Of ditties and of songes glad, the which he for my sake made, the land fulfilled is over all," Gower makes Love say in his lifetime; and the impression of gladness remains just as fresh now that four hundred years have passed away. The historical character of Chaucer's work lies on its surface. It stands out in vivid contrast with the poetic literature from the heart of which it sprang. The long French romances were the product of an age of wealth and ease, of indolent curiosity, of a fanciful and self-indulgent sentiment. Of the great passions which gave life to the Middle Ages, that of religious enthusiasm had degenerated into the pretty conceits of Mariolatry, that of war into the gorgeous extravagances of Chivalry. Love, indeed, remained; it was the one theme of troubadour and trouveur, but it was a love of refinement, of romantic follies, of scholastic discussions, of sensuous enjoyment—a plaything rather than a passion. Nature had to reflect the pleasant indolence of man; the song of the minstrel moved through a perpetual May-time; the grass was ever green; the music of the lark and the nightingale rang out from field and thicket. There was a gay avoidance of all that is serious, moral, or reflective in man's life: life was too amusing to be serious, too piquant, too sentimental, too full of interest and gaiety and chat. It was an age of talk: "mirth is none," says the host, "to ride on by the way dumb as a stone;" and the Trouveur aimed simply at being the most agreeable talker of his day. His romances, his rhymes of King Horn or Sir Tristram,

his Romance of the Rose, are full of colour and fantasy, endless in detail, but with a sort of gorgeous idleness about their very length, the minuteness of their description of outer things, the vagueness of their touch when it passes to the subtler inner world. Nothing is more unreal than the tone of the French romance, nothing more absolutely real than the tone of Chaucer. If with the best modern critics we reject from the list of his genuine works the bulk of the poems which preceded "Troilus and Cressida," we see at once that, familiar as he was with the literature of the Trouveres, his real sympathies drew him not to the dying verse of France, but to the new and mighty upgrowth of poetry in Italy. Dante's eagle looks at him from the sun. "Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poete," is to him one "whose rethorique sweete enlumyned al Itail of poetrie." The "Troilus" is an enlarged English version of Boccaccio's "Filostrato," the Knight's Tale of his Teseide. It was, indeed, the "Decameron" which suggested the very form of the "Canterbury Tales." But even while changing, as it were, the front of English poetry, Chaucer preserves his own distinct personality. If he quizzes in the rime of Sir Thopaz the wearisome idleness of the French romance, he retains all that was worth retaining of the French temper, its rapidity and agility of movement, its lightness and brilliancy of touch, its airy mockery, its gaiety and good humour, its critical coolness and self-control. The French wit quickens in him more than in any English writer the sturdy sense and shrewdness of our national disposition, corrects its extravagance, and relieves its somewhat ponderous morality. If, on the other hand, he echoes the joyous carelessness of the Italian tale, he tempers it with the English seriousness. As he follows Boccaccio, all his changes are on the side of purity; and when the Troilus of the Florentine ends with the old sneer at the changeableness of woman, Chaucer bids us "look Godward," and dwells on the unchangeableness of Heaven. 1338 to 1360

The Canterbury Tales

But the genius of Chaucer was neither French nor Italian, whatever element it might borrow from either literature, but English to the core. Of the history of the great poem on which his fame must rest, or of the order in which the "Canterbury Tales" were really written, a little is now known. The work was the fruit of his old age: it was in his last home, the house in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel at Westminster, that Chaucer rested from his labours; and here he must have been engaged on the poem which his death left unfinished. Its story—that of a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury—not only enabled him to string together a number of tales which seem to have been composed at very different times, but lent itself admirably to the peculiar characteristics of his poetic temper, dramatic power, and the universality of his sympathy. His tales cover the whole field of mediæval poetry; the legend of the priest, the knightly romance, the wonder-tale of the traveller, the broad humour of the fabliau, allegory and apologue, all are there. He finds a yet wider scope for his genius in the persons who

1356 to 1380

tell these stories, the thirty pilgrims who start in the May morning from the Tabard in Southwark—thirty distinct figures, representatives of every class of English society, from the noble to the ploughman. We see the "verray perfight gentil knight" in cassock and coat of mail, with his curly-headed squire beside him, fresh as the May morning, and behind them the brown-faced yeoman, in his coat and hood of green, with the good bow in his hand. A group of ecclesiastics lights up for us the mediæval church—the brawny hunt-loving monk, whose bridle jingles as loud and clear as the chapel-bell—the wanton friar, first among the beggars and harpers of the country side—the poor parson, threadbare, learned, and devout ("Christ's lore and His apostles' twelve he taught, and first he followed it himself")—the summoner with his fiery face—the pardoner with his wallet "bret-full of pardons, come from Rome all hot"—the lively prioress with her courtly French lisp, her soft little red mouth, and "Amor vincit omnia" graven on her brooch. Learning is there in the portly person of the doctor of physic, rich with the profits of the pestilence—the busy serjeant-of-law, "that ever seemed busier than he was"—the hollow-cheeked clerk of Oxford, with his love of books, and short, sharp sentences that disguise a latent tenderness which breaks out at last in the story of Griseldis. Around them crowd types of English industry; the merchant; the franklin, in whose house "it snowed of meat and drink;" the sailor fresh from frays in the Channel; the buxom wife of Bath; the broad-shouldered miller; the haberdasher, carpenter, weaver, dyer, tapestry-maker, each in the new livery of his craft; and last, the honest ploughman, who would dyke and delve for the poor without hire. It is the first time in English poetry that we are brought face to face not with characters or allegories or reminiscences of the past, but with living and breathing men, men distinct in temper and sentiment as in face or costume or mode of speech; and with this distinctness of each maintained throughout the story by a thousand shades of expression and action. It is the first time, too, that we meet with the dramatic power which not only creates each character, but combines it with its fellows, which not only adjusts each tale or jest to the temper of the person who utters it, but fuses all into a poetic unity. It is life in its largeness, its variety, its complexity, which surrounds us in the "Canterbury Tales." In some of the stories, indeed, composed no doubt at an earlier time, there is the tedium of the old romance or the pedantry of the schoolman; but taken as a whole the poem is the work not of a man of letters, but of a man of action. He has received his training from war, courts, business, travel—a training not of books, but of life. And it is life that he loves—the delicacy of its sentiment, the breadth of its farce, its laughter and its tears, the tenderness of its Griseldis or the Smollett-like adventures of the miller and the schoolboy. It is this largeness of heart, this wide tolerance, which enables him to reflect man for us as none but Shakespeare has ever reflected it, but to reflect it

with a pathos, a shrewd sense and kindly humour, a freshness and joyousness of feeling, that even Shakespeare has not surpassed. 1336 to 1360

It is strange that such a voice as this should have awakened no echo in the singers who follow; but the first burst of English song died as suddenly and utterly with Chaucer as the hope and glory of his age. The hundred years which follow the brief sunshine of Cressy and the "Canterbury Tales" are years of the deepest gloom; no age of our history is so sad and sombre as the age which we traverse from the third Edward to Joan of Arc. The throb of hope and glory which pulsed at its outset through every class of English society died into inaction or despair. Material life lingered on indeed, commerce still widened, but its progress was dissociated from all the nobler elements of national well-being. The towns sank again into close oligarchies; the bondsmen struggling forward to freedom fell back into a serfage which still leaves its trace on the soil. Literature reached its lowest ebb. The religious revival of the Lollard was trodden out in blood, while the Church shrivelled into a self-seeking secular priesthood. In the clash of civil strife political freedom was all but extinguished, and the age which began with the Good Parliament ended with the despotism of the Tudors.

England and France

The secret of the change is to be found in the fatal war which for more than a hundred years drained the strength and corrupted the temper of the English people. We have followed the attack on Scotland to its disastrous close, but the struggle, ere it ended, had involved England in a second contest, to which, for the sake of clearness, we have only slightly alluded, but to which we must now turn back, a contest yet more ruinous than that which Edward the First had begun. From the war with Scotland sprang the hundred years' struggle with France. From the first, France had watched the successes of her rival in the north, partly with a natural jealousy, but still more as likely to afford her an opening for winning the great southern Duchy of Guienne—the one fragment of Eleanor's inheritance which remained to her descendants. Scotland had no sooner begun to resent the claims of her over-lord, Edward the First, than a pretext for interference was found in the rivalry between the mariners of Normandy and those of the Cinque Ports, which culminated at the moment in a great sea-fight that proved fatal to 8000 Frenchmen. So eager was Edward to avert a quarrel with France, that his threats roused the English seamen to a characteristic defiance. "Be the King's Council well advised," ran the remonstrance of the mariners, "that if wrong or grievance be done them in any fashion against right, they will sooner forsake wives, children, and all that they have, and go seek through the seas where they shall think to make their profit." In spite, therefore, of Edward's efforts the contest continued, and Philip found an opportunity to cite the King before his court at Paris for wrongs done to his suzerain. Again Edward endeavoured to avert the conflict by a formal cession of Guienne into Philip's hands during

1338 to 1360 forty days, but the refusal of the French sovereign to restore the province left no choice for him but war. The instant revolt of Balliol proved that the French outrage was but the first blow in a deliberate and long-planned scheme of attack; Edward had for a 1294 while no force to waste on France, and when the first conquest of Scotland freed his hands, his league with Flanders for the recovery of Guienne was foiled by the refusal of his baronage to follow him on a foreign campaign. Even after the victory of Falkirk, Scotch independence was still saved, as we have seen, for three years by the threats of France and the intervention of its ally, Boniface the Eighth; and it was only the quarrel of these two confederates which allowed Edward to complete its subjection. But the rising under Bruce was again backed by French aid and by the renewal of the old quarrel over Guienne—a quarrel which hampered England through the reign of Edward the Second, and which indirectly brought about his terrible fall. The accession of Edward the Third secured a momentary peace, but the fresh attack on Scotland which marked the opening of his reign kindled hostility anew; the young King David found refuge in France, and arms, money, and men were despatched from its ports to support his cause. It was this intervention of France which foiled Edward's hopes of the submission of Scotland at the very moment when success seemed in his grasp; the solemn announcement by Philip of Valois that his treaties bound him to give effective help to his old ally, and the assembly of a French fleet in the Channel drew the King from his struggle in the north to face a storm which his negotiations could no longer avert.

1336 The two weapons on which Edward counted for success at the opening of the contest thus forced on him were the wealth of England and his claim upon the crown of France. The commerce of the country was still mainly limited to the exportation of wool to Flanders, but the rapid rise of this trade may be conjectured from the fact that in a single year Edward received more than £80,000 from duties levied on wool alone. So fine was the breed of sheep, that the exportation of live rams for the improvement of foreign wool was forbidden by law, though a flock is said to have been smuggled out of the realm shortly after, and to have become the source of the famous merinos of Spain. Up to Edward's time few woollen fabrics seem to have been woven in England, though Flemish weavers had come over with the Conqueror to found the prosperity of Norwich; but the number of weavers' guilds shows that the trade was gradually extending. Edward appears to have taken it under his especial care; at the outset of his reign he invited Flemish weavers to settle in his country, and took the new immigrants, who chose principally Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex for the seat of their trade, under his especial protection. It was on the wealth which England derived from the great development of its commerce that the King relied for the promotion of a great league with Flanders and the Empire, by which he proposed to bring the French

war to an end. Anticipating the later policy of Godolphin and Pitt, Edward became the paymaster of the poorer princes of Germany; his subsidies purchased the aid of Hainault, Gueldres, and Juliers; sixty thousand crowns went to the Duke of Brabant, while the Emperor himself was induced by a promise of 3000 gold florins to furnish 2000 men-at-arms. Years, however, of elaborate negotiations and profuse expenditure brought the King little fruit save the title of Vicar-General of the Empire on the left of the Rhine; now the Flemings hung back, now his imperial allies refused to move without the Emperor's express consent; and when the host at last crossed the border Edward found it impossible to bring the French King to an engagement. Philip, meanwhile, was busy in sweeping the Channel and harrying the shores of England; and his threats of invasion were only averted by a naval victory off the Flemish coast, in which Edward in person utterly destroyed for the time the fleet of France. The King's difficulties, however, had at last reached their height. His loans from the great bankers of Florence amounted to half-a-million of our money; his overtures for peace were contemptuously rejected; his claim to the French crown found not a single adherent. To establish such a claim, indeed, was difficult enough. The three sons of Philip le Bel had died without male issue, and Edward claimed as the son of Philip's daughter Isabella. But though her brothers had left no sons, they had left daughters; and if female succession were admitted, these daughters of Philip's sons would precede the son of Philip's daughter. If, on the other hand, as the great bulk of French jurists asserted, only male succession gave right to the throne, then the right of Philip le Bel was exhausted, and the crown passed to the son of his brother Charles, who had in fact peacefully succeeded to it as Philip of Valois. By a legal subtlety, however, while asserting the rights of female succession and of the line of Philip le Bel, Edward alleged that the nearest living male descendant of that King could claim in preference to females who were related to him in as near a degree. Though advanced on the accession of Philip of Valois, the claim seems to have been regarded on both sides as a mere formality; Edward, in fact, did full and liege homage to his rival for his Duchy of Guienne; and it was not till his hopes from Germany had been exhausted, and his claim was found to be useful in securing the loyal aid of the Flemish cities, that it was brought seriously to the front. But a fresh campaign in the Low Countries was as fruitless as its predecessors, and the ruin of the English party in Flanders, through the death of its chief, Van Arteveld, was poorly compensated by a new opening for attack in Brittany, where, of the two rival claimants to the Duchy, one did homage to Philip and the other to Edward.

1336 to 1360

1339

The failure of his foreign hopes threw Edward on the resources of England itself, and it was with an army of thirty thousand men that he landed at La Hogue, and commenced a march which was to

Creasy

1338 to 1340

change the whole face of the war. His aim was simply to advance ravaging to the north, where he designed to form a junction with a Flemish force gathered at Gravelines, but the rivers between them were carefully guarded, and it was only by throwing a bridge across the Seine at Poissy, and by forcing the ford of Blanche-Taque on the Somme, that Edward escaped the necessity of surrendering to the vast host which was hastening in pursuit. His communications, however, were no sooner secured than he halted at the little village of Cressy in Ponthieu, and resolved to give battle. Half of his army, now greatly reduced in strength, consisted of the light-armed footmen of Ireland and Wales; the bulk of the remainder was composed of English bowmen. The King ordered his men-at-arms to dismount, and drew up his forces on a low rise sloping gently to the south-east, with a windmill on its summit from which he could overlook the whole field of battle. Immediately beneath him lay the reserve, while at the base of the slope was placed the main body of the army in two divisions, that to the right commanded by the young Prince of Wales, that to the left by the Earl of Northampton. A small ditch protected the English front, and behind it the bowmen were drawn up "in the form of a harrow," with small bombards between them "which, with fire, threw little iron balls to frighten the horses"— the first instance of the use of artillery in field warfare. The halt of the English army took Philip by surprise, and he attempted for a time to check the advance of his army, but the disorderly host rolled on to the English front. The sight of his enemies, indeed, stirred the King's own blood to fury, "for he hated them," and at vespers the fight began. Fifteen thousand Genoese crossbowmen, hired from among the soldiers of the Lord of Monaco, on the sunny Riviera, were ordered to begin the attack. The men were weary with the march; a sudden storm wetted and rendered useless their bowstrings; and the loud shouts with which they leapt forward to the encounter were met with dogged silence in the English ranks. Their first arrow-flight, however, brought a terrible reply. So rapid was the English shot, "that it seemed as if it snowed." "Kill me these scoundrels," shouted Philip, as the Genoese fell back; and his men-at-arms plunged butchering into their broken ranks, while the Counts of Alençon and Flanders, at the head of the French knighthood, fell hotly on the Prince's line. For the instant his small force seemed lost, but Edward refused to send him aid. "Is he dead or unhorsed, or so wounded that he cannot help himself?" he asked the envoy. "No, Sir," was the reply, "but he is in a hard passage of arms, and sorely needs your help." "Return to those that sent you, Sir Thomas," said the King, "and bid them not send to me again so long as my son lives! Let the boy win his spurs; for I wish, if God so order it, that the day may be his, and that the honour may be with him and them to whom I have given it in charge." Edward could see, in fact, from his higher ground, that all went well. The bowmen

Cressy, August 26, 1346

and men-at-arms held their ground stoutly, while the Welshmen were stabbing the horses in the mêlée, and bringing knight after knight to the ground. Soon the great French host was wavering in a fatal confusion. "You are my vassals, my friends," cried the blind King of Bohemia, who had joined Philip's army, to the nobles around him: "I pray and beseech you to lead me so far into the fight that I may strike one good blow with this sword of mine!" Linking their bridles together, the little company plunged into the thick of the combat to fall as their fellows were falling. The battle went steadily against the French: at last Philip himself hurried from the field, and the defeat became a rout: 1200 knights and 30,000 footmen—a number equal to the whole English force—lay dead upon the ground. 1336 to 1360

"God has punished us for our sins," cries the chronicler of St. Denys, in a passion of bewildered grief, as he tells the rout of the great host which he had seen mustering beneath his abbey walls. But the fall of France was hardly so sudden or so incomprehensible then as the fall of chivalry. The lesson which England had learnt at Bannockburn she taught the world at Cressy. The whole social and political fabric of the Middle Ages rested on a military base, and its base was suddenly withdrawn. The churl had struck down the noble; the bondsman proved more than a match in sheer hard fighting for the knight. From the day of Cressy feudalism tottered slowly but surely to its grave. But to England the day was the beginning of a career of military glory, which, fatal as it was destined to prove to the higher sentiments and interests of the nation, gave it for the moment an energy such as it had never known before. Victory followed victory. A few months after Cressy a Scotch army which had burst into the north was routed at Neville's Cross, and its King, David, taken prisoner; while the withdrawal of the French from the Garonne left England unopposed in Guienne and Poitou. Edward's aim, however, was not to conquer France, but simply to save English commerce by securing the mastery of the Channel. Calais was the great pirate-haven; in one year alone, twenty-two privateers had sailed from its port; while its capture promised the King an easy base of communication with Flanders, and of operations against France. The siege lasted a year, and it was not till Philip had failed to relieve it that the town was starved into surrender. Mercy was granted to the garrison and the people on condition that six of the citizens gave themselves unconditionally into the King's hands. "On them," said Edward, with a burst of bitter hatred, "I will do my will." At the sound of the town bell, Jehan le Bel tells us, the folk of Calais gathered round the bearer of these terms, "desiring to hear their good news, for they were all mad with hunger. When the said knight told them his news, then began they to weep and cry so loudly that it was great pity. Then stood up the wealthiest burgess of the town, Master Eustache de S. Pierre by name, and spake thus before all: 'My masters, great grief and mishap it were for all

Calais

Neville's Cross, Oct. 1346

1347

1338 to 1360

to leave such a people as this is to die by famine or otherwise; and great charity and grace would he win from our Lord who could defend them from dying. For me, I have great hope in the Lord that if I can save this people by my death, I shall have pardon for my faults, wherefore will I be the first of the six, and of my own will put myself barefoot in my shirt and with a halter round my neck in the mercy of King Edward.' " The list of devoted men was soon made up, and the six victims were led before the King. " All the host assembled together; there was great press, and many bade hang them openly, and many wept for pity. The noble King came with his train of counts and barons to the place, and the Queen followed him, though great with child, to see what there would be. The six citizens knelt down at once before the King, and Master Eustache said thus: 'Gentle King, here be we six who have been of the old bourgeoisie of Calais and great merchants; we bring you the keys of the town and castle of Calais, and render them to you at your pleasure. We set ourselves in such wise as you see purely at your will, to save the remnant of the people that has suffered much pain. So may you have pity and mercy on us for your high nobleness' sake.' Certes, there was then in that place neither lord nor knight that wept not for pity, nor who could speak for pity; but the King had his heart so hardened by wrath, that for a long while he could not reply; then he commanded to cut off their heads. All the knights and lords prayed him with tears, as much as they could, to have pity on them, but he would not hear. Then spoke the gentle knight, Master Walter de Manny, and said, 'Ha, gentle sire! bridle your wrath; you have the renown and good fame of all gentleness; do not a thing whereby men can speak any villany of you! If you have no pity, all men will say that you have a heart full of all cruelty to put these good citizens to death that of their own will are come to render themselves to you to save the remnant of their people.' At this point the King changed countenance with wrath, and said, 'Hold your peace, Master Walter! it shall be none otherwise. Call the headsman! They of Calais have made so many of my men die, that they must die themselves!' Then did the noble Queen of England a deed of noble lowliness, seeing she was great with child, and wept so tenderly for pity, that she could no longer stand upright; therefore she cast herself on her knees before her lord the King, and spake on this wise: 'Ah, gentle sire! from the day that I passed over sea in great peril, as you know, I have asked for nothing: now pray I and beseech you, with folded hands, for the love of our Lady's Son, to have mercy upon them.' The gentle King waited a while before speaking, and looked on the Queen as she knelt before him bitterly weeping. Then began his heart to soften a little, and he said, 'Lady, I would rather you had been otherwhere; you pray so tenderly, that I dare not refuse you; and though I do it against my will, nevertheless take them, I give them you.' Then took he the six citizens by the halters and delivered them to the

Queen, and released from death all those of Calais for the love of her; and the good lady bade them clothe the six burgesses and make them good cheer." 1336 to 1360

A great naval victory won over a Spanish pirate fleet which was sweeping the narrow seas completed the work which had begun with the capture of Calais. In Froissart's naval picture we see the King sitting on deck in his jacket of black velvet, his head covered with a black beaver hat which became him well, and calling on his minstrels to play to him on the horn, and on John Chandos to troll out the songs he has brought over from Germany, till the great Spanish ships heave in sight, and a furious struggle begins which ends in their destruction. Edward was now "King of the Sea," but peace with France was as far off as ever. Even the truce which had for eight years been forced on both countries by sheer exhaustion became at last impossible. Edward threw three armies at once on the French coast, but the campaign proved a fruitless one. The "Black Prince," as the hero of Cressy was now styled, alone won a disgraceful success. Northern and central France had by this time fallen into utter ruin; the royal treasury was empty, the fortresses unoccupied, the troops disbanded for want of pay, the country swept by bandits. Only the south remained at peace, and the young Prince led his army of freebooters up the Garonne into "what was before one of the fat countries of the world, the people good and simple, who did not know what war was; indeed, no war had been waged against them till the Prince came. The English and Gascons found the country full and gay, the rooms adorned with carpets and draperies, the caskets and chests full of fair jewels. But nothing was safe from these robbers. They, and especially the Gascons, who are very greedy, carried off everything." The capture of Narbonne loaded them with booty, and they fell back to Bordeaux, "their horses so laden with spoil that they could hardly move." With the same aim of plunder, the Black Prince started the next year for the Loire; but the assembly of a French army under John, who had succeeded Philip of Valois on the throne, forced him to retreat. As he approached Poitiers, however, he found the French, who now numbered 60,000 men, in his path. The Prince at once took a strong position in the fields of Maupertuis, his front covered by thick hedges, and approachable only by a deep and narrow lane which ran between vineyards. The Prince lined the vineyards and hedges with bowmen, and drew up his small body of men-at-arms at the point where the lane opened upon the higher plain where he was encamped. His force numbered only 8000 men, and the danger was great enough to force him to offer the surrender of his prisoners, and an oath not to fight against France for seven years, in exchange for a free retreat. The terms were rejected, and three hundred French knights charged up the narrow lane. It was soon choked with men and horses, while the front ranks of the advancing army fell back before the galling fire of arrows from the hedgerows. In the moment of confusion a body of

Poitiers

1347 to 1355

Poitiers, Sep. 19, 1356

1336 to 1360

English horsemen, posted on a hill to the right, charged suddenly on the French flank, and the Prince seized the opportunity to fall boldly on their front. The English archery completed the disorder produced by this sudden attack; the French King was taken, desperately fighting; and at noontide, when his army poured back in utter rout to the gates of Poitiers, 8000 of their number had fallen on the field, 3000 in the flight, and 2000 men-at-arms, with a crowd of nobles, were taken prisoners. The royal captive entered London in triumph, and a truce for two years seemed to give healing-time to France. But the miserable country found no rest in itself. The routed soldiery turned into free companies of bandits, while the captive lords purchased their ransom by extortion which drove the peasantry into universal revolt. "Jacques Bonhomme," as the insurgents called themselves, waged war against the castles; while Paris, impatient of the weakness and misrule of the Regency, rose in arms against the Crown. The rising had hardly been crushed, when Edward again poured ravaging over the wasted land. Famine, however, proved its best defence. "I could not believe," said Petrarch of this time, "that this was the same France which I had seen so rich and flourishing. Nothing presented itself to my eyes but a fearful solitude, an utter poverty, land uncultivated, houses in ruins. Even the neighbourhood of Paris showed everywhere marks of desolation and conflagration. The streets are deserted, the roads overgrown with weeds, the whole is a vast solitude." Both parties were at last worn out. Edward's army had fallen back, ruined, on the Loire, when proposals of peace reached him. By the treaty of Bretigny, the English King waived his claims on the crown of France and on the Duchy of Normandy. On the other hand, his Duchy of Acquitaine, which included Gascony, Guienne, Poitou, and Saintonge, was left to him, no longer as a fief, but in full sovereignty, while his new conquest of Calais remained a part of the possessions of the English crown.

Treaty of Bretigny, May, 1360

Green's account of the origin of the Hundred Years' War should be compared with that given by Déprez, "Préliminaires de la guerre de Cent Ans." It is probable that the account in the text attaches too much importance to the Scottish side of the quarrel and hardly enough to the commercial cause of the war. The constant pressure of the French upon Gascony, which tended to make the position of the English in that district untenable, was almost certain to produce a conflict, quite apart from the Franco-Scottish alliance. For the claim to the French throne, see also Déprez. Edward did not definitely assume the title of king of France until the war had actually begun, though his claim had been raised at the time of the accession of Philip VI., and the homage which had been done to the Valois king did not necessarily prejudice the later prosecution of the claim. On the battle of Poitiers, see Tout, "Political History of England, 1216-1377." Green is in error in stating that the suzerainty of France over the English possession was resigned by the treaty of 1360; it was abandoned in the preliminaries of peace at Bretigni, but reasserted in the definitive treaty of Calais.

Section II.—The Good Parliament, 1360—1377

1360 to 1377

[*Authorities.*—The most important authority for the close of Edward III.'s reign is the "Chronicon Angliæ" (Rolls Series), originally known through the compilation of Thomas of Walsingham. Among modern works, Armitage Smith, "John of Gaunt," and Trevelyan, "England in the Age of Wycliffe," may be mentioned.]

The Two Houses

If we turn from the stirring but barren annals of foreign warfare to the more fruitful field of constitutional progress, we are at once struck with a marked change which takes place during this period in the composition of Parliament. The division, with which we are so familiar, into a House of Lords and a House of Commons, formed no part of the original plan of Edward the First; in the earlier Parliaments, in fact, each of the four orders of clergy, barons, knights, and burgesses met, deliberated, and made their grants apart from each other. This isolation, however, of the Estates soon showed signs of breaking down. While the clergy, as we have seen, held steadily aloof from any real union with its fellow-orders, the knights of the shire were drawn by the similarity of their social position into a close connexion with the lords. They seem, in fact, to have been soon admitted by the baronage to an almost equal position with themselves, whether as legislators or councillors of the Crown. The burgesses, on the other hand, took little part in Parliamentary proceedings, save in those which related to the taxation of their class. But their position was raised by the strifes of the reign which followed, when their aid was needed by the baronage in its struggle with the Crown; and their right to share fully in all legislative action was asserted in the famous statute of Edward the Second. Gradually too, through causes with which we are imperfectly acquainted, the knights of the shire drifted from their older connexion with the baronage into so close and intimate a union with the representatives of the towns that at the opening of the reign of Edward the Third the two orders are found grouped formally together, under the name of "The Commons." It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this change. Had Parliament remained broken up into its four orders of clergy, barons, knights, and citizens, its power would have been neutralized at every great crisis by the jealousies and difficulty of co-operation among its component parts. The permanent union of the knighthood and the baronage, on the other hand, would have converted Parliament into the mere representative of an aristocratic caste, and would have robbed it of the strength which it has drawn from its connexion with the great body of the commercial classes. The new attitude of the knighthood, their social connexion as landed gentry with the baronage, their political union with the burgesses, really welded the three orders into one, and gave that unity of feeling and action to our Parliament on which its power has ever since mainly depended. From the moment

1360 to 1377

of this change, indeed, we see a marked increase of parliamentary activity. A crowd of enactments for the regulation of trade, whether wise or unwise, and for the protection of the subject against oppression or injustice, as well as the great ecclesiastical provisions of this reign, show the rapid widening of the sphere of parliamentary action. A yet larger development of their powers was offered to the Commons by Edward himself. In his anxiety to shift from his shoulders the responsibility of the war with France, he referred to them for counsel on the subject of one of the numerous propositions of peace. As yet, however, the Commons shrank from the task of advising the Crown on so difficult a subject as that of State policy. "Most dreaded lord," they replied, "as to your war and the equipment necessary for it, we are so ignorant and simple that we know not how, nor have the power, to devise: wherefore we pray your Grace to excuse us in this matter, and that it please you, with advice of the great and wise persons of your Council, to ordain what seems best to you for the honour and profit of yourself and of your kingdom; and whatsoever shall be thus ordained by assent and agreement for you and your lords we readily assent to, and will hold it firmly established." But while shrinking from so wide an extension of their responsibility, the Commons wrested from the Crown a practical reform of the highest value. As yet their petitions, if granted, had been embodied by the Royal Council in "Ordinances" at the close of the session, when it was impossible to decide whether the Ordinance was in actual accordance with the petition on which it was based. It was now agreed that, on the assent of the Crown to their petitions, they should at once be converted into "statutes," and derive force of law from their entry on the rolls of Parliament.

The Loss of Aquitaine, 1360 to 1396

The political responsibility which the Commons evaded was at last forced on them by the misfortunes of the war. In spite of quarrels in Brittany and elsewhere, peace had been fairly preserved in the nine years which followed the treaty of Bretigny; but the shrewd eye of Charles V., the successor of John, was watching keenly for the moment of renewing the struggle. He had cleared his kingdom of the freebooters by despatching them into Spain, and the Black Prince had plunged into the revolutions of that country only to return from his fruitless victory of Najara in broken health, and impoverished by the expenses of the campaign. The anger caused by the taxation which this necessitated was fanned by Charles into revolt. He listened, in spite of the treaty, to an appeal from the lords of Gascony, and summoned the Black Prince to his court. "I will come," replied the Prince, "but helmet

1369

on head, and with sixty thousand men at my back." War, however, had hardly been declared before the ability with which Charles had laid his plans was seen in the seizure of Ponthieu, and the insurrection of the whole country south of the Garonne. The Black Prince, borne on a litter to the walls of Limoges, recovered the town, which had been surrendered to the French, and by a

merciless massacre sullied the fame of his earlier exploits; but sickness recalled him home, and the war, protracted by the caution of Charles, who had forbidden his armies to engage, did little but exhaust the energy and treasures of England. At last, however, the fatal error of the Prince's policy was seen in the appearance of a Spanish fleet in the Channel, and in a decisive victory which it won over an English convoy off Rochelle. The blow was in fact fatal to the English cause, wresting as it did from them the mastery of the seas; and Charles was roused to new exertions. Poitou, Saintonge, and the Angoumois yielded to his general Du Guesclin, while a great army under John of Gaunt penetrated fruitlessly into the heart of France. Charles had forbidden any fighting. "If a storm rages over the land," said the King, coolly, "it disperses of itself; and so will it be with the English." Winter, in fact, overtook the Duke of Lancaster in the mountains of Auvergne, and a mere fragment of his great host reached Bourdeaux. The failure was the signal for a general defection, and ere a year had passed the two towns of Bourdeaux and Bayonne were all that remained of the English possessions in Acquitaine. 1360 to 1377 1372 1374

It was a time of shame and suffering such as England had never known. Her conquests were lost, her shores insulted, her fleets annihilated, her commerce swept from the sea; while within she was exhausted by the long and costly war, as well as by the ravages of pestilence. In the hour of distress the eyes of the feudal baronage turned greedily on the riches of the Church. Never had her spiritual or moral hold on the nation been less; never had her wealth been greater. Out of a population of little more than two millions, the ecclesiastics numbered between twenty and thirty thousand, owning in landed property alone more than a third of the soil; their "spiritualities" in dues and offerings amounting to twice the royal revenue. The position of the bishops as statesmen was still more galling to the feudal baronage, flushed as it was with a new pride by the victories of Cressy and Poitiers. On the renewal of the war the Bishop of Winchester, William of Wykeham, was at once removed, with other prelates, from the ministry, and their places filled by creatures of the baronage, with John of Gaunt, the King's son, at their head. Heavy taxes were imposed on church lands, and projects of confiscation were openly advocated. But the utter failure of the new administration and the calamities of the war left it powerless before the Parliament of 1376. The action of this Parliament marks a new stage in the character of the natural opposition to the illegal government of the Crown. Till now the task of resistance had devolved on the baronage, and had been carried out through risings of its feudal tenantry; but the misgovernment was now that of the baronage itself. The progress of peace and order had rendered a recourse to warfare odious to the people at large, while the power of the Commons afforded an adequate means of peaceful redress. The old reluctance to meddle with matters of state was roughly swept away by the pressure of the time. The

The Good Parliament

Good Parliament, 1376

1360 to 1377 knights of the shire united with the burgesses in a joint attack on the royal council. "Trusting in God, and standing with his followers before the nobles, whereof the chief was John Duke of Lancaster, whose doings were ever contrary," their speaker, Sir Peter de la Mare, denounced the mismanagement of the war, the oppressive taxation, and demanded an account of the expenditure. "What do these base and ignoble knights attempt?" cried John of Gaunt. "Do they think they be kings or princes of the land?" But it was soon discovered that, sick as he was to death, the Black Prince gave his hearty support to the cause of the Commons. Lancaster was forced to withdraw from the Council, and the Parliament proceeded fearlessly in its task of investigation. A terrible list of abuses was revealed, which centred in the infamy of the King himself, who had sunk into a premature dotage, and was wholly under the influence of a mistress named Alice Perrers. She was forced to swear never to return to the King's presence; and the Parliament proceeded to the impeachment and condemnation of two ministers, Lord Latimer and William Lyons, and to the solemn presentation of one hundred and sixty petitions which embodied the grievances of the realm. They demanded the annual assembly of Parliament, and freedom of election for the knights of the shire, whose choice was now often tampered with by the Crown; they protested against arbitrary taxation and Papal inroads on the liberties of the Church; petitioned for the

1377 protection of trade, and demanded a vigorous prosecution of the war. The death of the Prince suddenly interrupted the work of reform; Lancaster resumed his power, and by an unscrupulous interference with elections procured the return of a new Parliament, which reversed the Acts of its predecessor. The greed of the triumphant baronage broke out in a fresh strife with the great churchmen who had, whether for their own purposes or not, supported the popular party. William of Wykeham was again dismissed from office, and summoned to Parliament. Fresh projects of spoliation were openly canvassed, and it is his support of these plans of confiscation which first brings us historically across the path of John Wyclif.

In the Good Parliament, the Black Prince and the Earl of March were allied with the clerical ministers, of whom the chief was William of Wykeham; Peter de la Mare was seneschal to the Earl of March. John of Gaunt was allied with a court and legal party, though it is worth noticing that among his supporters was Lyons, a London merchant. It is possible to contend that the Good Parliament was "packed" no less than the succeeding parliament by which its acts were largely reversed. For a more favourable estimate of John of Gaunt, see Armitage Smith's "Life."

Section III.—John Wyclif

[*Authorities.*—The De Dominio Divino and the De Civili Dominio are edited in "Fasciculi Zizaniorum" (Rolls Series). Reference should also be made to the edition of Wyclif's Latin works (published for the Wycliffe Society), and to "The Select English Works of John Wycliffe," edited Arnold, and the English Works of Wycliffe hitherto unprinted (Early English Text Society). Poole, "Illustrations of the History of Mediæval Thought"; Lechler, "Wiclif und die Vogeschichte der Reformation"; and the volume in Stephens' and Hunt's "History of the English Church," are all useful works. There are several biographies of Wyclif; cp. the "Dictionary of National Biography," art. Wycliffe.]

Wyclif

Nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between the obscurity of Wyclif's earlier life and the fulness and vividness of our knowledge of him during the twenty years which preceded its close. Born in the earlier part of the fourteenth century, he had already reached middle age when he was appointed to the mastership of Balliol College, in the University of Oxford, and recognized as first among the schoolmen of his day. Of all the scholastic doctors those of England had been throughout the keenest and the most daring in philosophical speculation; a reckless audacity and love of novelty was the common note of Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Ockham, as against the sober and more disciplined learning of the Parisian schoolmen, Albert and Aquinas. But the decay of the University of Paris during the English wars had transferred her intellectual supremacy to Oxford, and in Oxford Wyclif stood without a rival. To his predecessor, Bradwardine, whose work as a scholastic teacher he carried on in the speculative treatises he published during this period, he owed the tendency to a predestinarian Augustinianism which formed the groundwork of his later theological revolt. His debt to Ockham revealed itself in his earliest efforts at Church reform. Undismayed by the thunder and excommunications of the Church, Ockham had not shrunk in his enthusiasm for the Empire from attacking the foundations of the Papal supremacy or from asserting the rights of the civil power. The spare, emaciated frame of Wyclif, weakened by study and by asceticism, hardly promised a Reformer who would carry on the stormy work of Ockham; but within this frail form lay a temper quick and restless, an immense energy, an immovable conviction, an unconquerable pride. The personal charm which ever accompanies real greatness only deepened the influence he derived from the spotless purity of his life. As yet indeed even Wyclif himself can hardly have suspected the immense range of his intellectual power. It was only the struggle that lay before him which revealed in the dry and subtle schoolman the founder of our later English prose, a master of popular invective, of irony, of persuasion, a dexterous politician, an audacious partisan, the organizer of a religious order, the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and

1324? to 1361

most indefatigable of controversialists, the first Reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him, to break through the tradition of the past, and with his last breath to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the Papacy.

England and the Papacy

The attack of Wyclif began precisely at the moment when the Church of the middle ages had sunk to its lowest point of spiritual decay. The transfer of the Papacy to Avignon robbed it of much of the awe in which it had been held, for not only had the Popes sunk into creatures of the French King, but their greed and extortion produced almost universal revolt. The claim of first fruits and annates from all ecclesiastical preferments, the assumption of a right to dispose of all benefices in ecclesiastical patronage, the imposition of direct taxes on the clergy, the intrusion of foreign priests into English livings and English sees, produced a fierce hatred and contempt of Rome which never slept till the Reformation. The people scorned a "French Pope," and threatened his legates with stoning when they landed. The wit of Chaucer flouted the wallet of "pardons hot from Rome." Parliament vindicated the right of the State to prohibit the admission or execution of Papal bulls or briefs within the realm by the Statute of Præmunire, and denied the Papal claim to dispose of benefices by that of Provisors. But the failure of the effort showed the amazing power which Rome had acquired from the unquestioning submission of so many ages. The Pope waived indeed his right to appoint foreigners; but by a compromise, in which Pope and King combined for the enslaving of the Church, archbishoprics, bishoprics, abbacies, and the wealthier livings still continued to receive Papal nominees. The protest of the Good Parliament is a record of the ill-success of its predecessor's attempt. It asserted that the taxes levied by the Pope amounted to five times the amount of those levied by the King, that by reservation during the life of actual holders he disposed of the same bishopric four or five times over, receiving each time the first fruits. "The brokers of the sinful City of Rome promote for money unlearned and unworthy caitiffs to benefices of the value of a thousand marks, while the poor and learned hardly obtain one of twenty. So decays sound learning. They present aliens who neither see nor care to see their parishioners, despise God's services, convey away the treasure of the realm, and are worse than Jews or Saracens. The Pope's revenue from England alone is larger than that of any prince in Christendom. God gave his sheep to be pastured, not to be shaven and shorn." The grievances were no trifling ones. At this very time the deaneries of Lichfield, Salisbury, and York, the archdeaconry of Canterbury, which was reputed the wealthiest English benefice, together with a host of prebends and preferments, were held by Italian cardinals and priests, while the Pope's collector from his office in London sent twenty thousand marks a year to the Papal treasury.

Statutes of Præmunire and Provisors

If extortion and tyranny such as this severed the English clergy from the Papacy, their own selfishness severed them from the nation at large. Immense as was their wealth, they bore as little as they could of the common burthens of the realm. The old quarrel over the civil jurisdiction still lingered on, and the mild punishments of the ecclesiastical courts carried little dismay into the mass of disorderly clerks. Privileged as they were against all interference from the world without, the clergy penetrated by their control over wills, contracts, divorce, by the dues they exacted, as well as by directly religious offices, into the very heart of the social life around them. Thousands of summoners enforced their social jurisdiction, and there were few persons of substance who escaped the vexations of their courts. On the other hand, their moral authority was rapidly passing away; the wealthiest churchmen, with curled hair and hanging sleeves, aped the costume of the knightly society to which they really belonged. We have already seen the general impression of their worldliness in Chaucer's picture of the hunting monk and the courtly prioress, with her love-motto on her brooch. Over the vice of the higher classes they exerted no influence whatever; the King paraded his mistress as a Queen of Beauty through London, the nobles blazoned their infamy in court and tournament. "In those days," says a canon of the time, "arose a great rumour and clamour among the people, that wherever there was a tournament there came a great concourse of ladies of the most costly and beautiful, but not of the best in the kingdom, sometimes forty or fifty in number, as if they were a part of the tournament, in diverse and wonderful male apparell, in parti-coloured tunics, with short caps and bands wound cord-wise round their head, and girdles bound with gold and silver, and daggers in pouches across their body, and then they proceeded on chosen coursers to the place of tourney, and so expended and wasted their goods and vexed their bodies with scurrilous wantonness that the rumour of the people sounded everywhere; and thus they neither feared God nor blushed at the chaste voice of the people." They were not called on to blush at the chaste voice of the Church. The clergy were in fact rent by their own dissensions. The higher prelates were busy with the cares of political office, and severed from the lower priesthood by the scandalous inequality between the revenues of the wealthier ecclesiastics and the "poor parson" of the country. The older religious orders had sunk into mere landowners, while the enthusiasm of the Friars had utterly died away and left a crowd of impudent mendicants behind it. In Oxford itself a fierce schism had for some time divided the secular clergy, who now came to the front of the scholastic movement, from the regulars with whom it had begun. Fitz-Ralf, the Archbishop of Armagh, who had been its Chancellor, attributed to the Friars the decline in the number of academical students, and the University checked by statute their admission of mere children into their orders. Wyclif, at a later time, denounced them as sturdy beggars,

England and the Church

and declared formally that "the man who gives alms to a begging Friar is *ipso facto* excommunicate."

Wyclif and Church Reform

Without the ranks of the clergy stood a world of earnest men who, like Piers the Ploughman, denounced their worldliness and vice, sceptics, like Chaucer, laughing at the jingling bells of their hunting-abbots, and the brutal and greedy baronage under John of Gaunt, eager to drive the prelates from office and to seize on their wealth. Worthless as the last party seems to us, it was with John of Gaunt that Wyclif allied himself in the first effort he
1365 made for the reform of the Church. As yet his quarrel was not with its doctrine, but with its practice: it was on the principles of Ockham that he defended the Parliament's indignant refusal of
1370 the "tribute" which was claimed by the Papacy, the expulsion of the bishops from office by the Duke of Lancaster, and the taxation of Church lands. But his treatise on "The Kingdom of God" (De Dominio Divino) shows how different his aims really were from the selfish aims of the men with whom he acted. In this, the most famous of his works, Wyclif bases his action on a distinct ideal of society. All authority, to use his own expression,
1376 is "founded in Grace." Dominion in the highest sense is in God alone; it is God who, as the suzerain of the universe, deals out His rule in fief to rulers in their various stations on tenure of their obedience to himself. It was easy to object that in such a case "dominion" could never exist, since mortal sin is a breach of such a tenure, and all men sin. But, as Wyclif urged it, the theory is a purely ideal one. In actual practice he distinguishes between dominion and power, power which the wicked may have by God's permission, and to which the Christian must submit from motives of obedience to God. In his own scholastic phrase, so strangely perverted afterwards, here on earth "God must obey the devil." But whether in the ideal or practical view of the matter, all power or dominion was of God. It was granted by Him not to one person, His Vicar on earth, as the Papacy alleged, but to all. The King was as truly God's Vicar as the Pope. The Royal power was as sacred as the ecclesiastical, and as complete over temporal things, even the temporalities of the Church, as that of the Church over spiritual things. On the question of Church and State therefore the distinction between the ideal and practical view was of little account. His application of the theory of "dominion" to the individual conscience was of far higher and wider importance. Obedient as each Christian might be to king or priest, he himself, as a possessor of "dominion," held immediately of God. The throne of God Himself was the tribunal of personal appeal. What the Reformers of the sixteenth century attempted to do by their theory of Justification by Faith, Wyclif attempted to do by his theory of "dominion." It was a theory which in establishing a direct relation between man and God swept away the whole basis of a mediating priesthood on which the mediæval Church was built; but for a time its real drift was hardly perceived. To

Wyclif's theory of Church and State, his subjection of their temporalities to the Crown, his contention that like other property they might be seized and employed for national purposes, his wish for their voluntary abandonment and the return of the Church to its original poverty, the clergy were more sensitive. They were just writhing under the attack on Wykeham by the nobles when the treatise appeared, and in the prosecution of Wyclif, who was regarded as the theological bulwark of the Lancastrian party, they resolved to return blow for blow. He was summoned before Bishop Courtenay of London to answer for his heretical propositions concerning the wealth of the Church. The Duke of Lancaster accepted the challenge as really given to himself, and stood by Wyclif's side in the Consistory Court at St. Paul's. But no trial took place. 1377
Fierce words passed between the nobles and the prelate; the Duke himself was said to have threatened to drag Courtenay out of the church by the hair of his head, and at last the London populace, to whom John of Gaunt was hateful, burst in to their Bishop's rescue. Wyclif's life was saved with difficulty by the aid of the soldiery, but his influence seems to have been unshaken. Papal bulls, which had been procured by the bishops, directing the University to condemn and arrest him, only extorted a bold defiance. In a defence circulated widely through the kingdom and laid before parliament, Wyclif broadly asserted that no man could be excommunicated by the Pope "unless he were first excommunicated by himself." He denied the right of the Church to exact or defend temporal privileges by spiritual censures, declared that a Church might justly be deprived by the king or lay lords of its property for defect of duty, and defended the subjection of ecclesiastics to civil tribunals. Bold as the defiance was, it won him the support of the people and the crown. When he appeared at the close of the year in Lambeth Chapel to answer the Archbishop's summons, a message from the Court forbade the Bishop to proceed, and the Londoners broke in and dissolved the session.

The First Protestant

Wyclif was still working hand in hand with John of Gaunt in advocating his plans of ecclesiastical reform, when the great insurrection of the peasants, which we shall soon have to describe, broke out under Wat Tyler. In a few months the whole of his work was undone. Not only was the power of the Lancastrian party on which Wyclif had relied for the moment annihilated, but the quarrel between the baronage and the Church, on which his action had hitherto been grounded, was hushed in the presence of a common danger. Much of the odium of the outbreak too fell on the Reformer: the Friars charged him with being a "sower of strife, who by his serpent-like instigation has set the serf against his lord," and though Wyclif tossed back the charge with disdain, he had to bear a suspicion which was justified by the conduct of some of his followers. John Ball, who had figured in the front rank of the revolt, was claimed as one of his adherents, and was alleged to have denounced in his last hour the conspiracy of the

"Wycliffites." His most prominent scholar, Nicholas Herford, was said to have openly approved the brutal murder of Archbishop Sudbury. Whatever belief such charges might gain, it is certain that from this moment all plans for the reorganization of the Church were confounded in the general odium which attached to the projects of the socialist peasant leaders, and that any hope of ecclesiastical reform at the hands of the baronage and the Parliament was at an end. But even if the Peasant Revolt had not deprived Wyclif of the support of the aristocratic party with whom he had hitherto co-operated, their alliance must have been dissolved by the new position which he had already taken up. Some months before the
1381 outbreak of the insurrection, he had by one memorable step passed from the position of a reformer of the discipline and political relations of the Church to that of a protestant against its cardinal beliefs. If there was one doctrine upon which the supremacy of the Mediæval Church rested, it was the doctrine of Transubstantiation. It was by his exclusive right to the performance of the miracle which was wrought in the mass that the lowliest priest was raised high above princes. With the formal denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation which Wyclif issued in the spring of 1381 began that great movement of revolt which ended, more than a century after, in the establishment of religious freedom, by severing the mass of the Teutonic peoples from the general body of the Catholic Church. The act was the bolder that he stood utterly alone. The University, in which his influence had been hitherto all-powerful, at once condemned him. John of Gaunt enjoined him to be silent. Wyclif was presiding as Doctor of Divinity over some disputations in the schools of the Augustinian Canons when his academical condemnation was publicly read, but though startled for the moment he at once challenged Chancellor or doctor to disprove the conclusions at which he had arrived. The prohibition of the Duke of Lancaster he met by an open avowal of his teaching, a confession which closes proudly with the quiet words, "I believe that in the end the truth will conquer." For the moment his courage dispelled the panic around him. The University responded to his appeal, and by displacing his opponents from office tacitly adopted his cause. But Wyclif no longer looked for support to the learned or wealthier classes on whom he had hitherto relied. He appealed, and the appeal is memorable as the first of such a kind in our history, to England at large. With an amazing industry he issued tract after tract in the tongue of the people itself. The dry, syllogistic Latin, the abstruse and involved argument which the great doctor had addressed to his academic hearers, were suddenly flung aside, and by a transition which marks the wonderful genius of the man the schoolman was transformed into the pamphleteer. If Chaucer is the father of our later English poetry, Wyclif is the father of our later English prose. The rough, clear, homely English of his tracts, the speech of the ploughman and the trader of the day, though coloured with the picturesque phraseology of the

Bible, is in its literary use as distinctly a creation of his own as the style in which he embodied it, the terse vehement sentences, the stinging sarcasms, the hard antitheses which roused the dullest mind like a whip. Once fairly freed from the trammels of unquestioning belief, Wyclif's mind worked fast in its career of scepticism. Pardons, indulgences, absolutions, pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints, worship of their images, worship of the saints themselves, were successively denied. A formal appeal to the Bible as the one ground of faith, coupled with an assertion of the right of every instructed man to examine the Bible for himself, threatened the very groundwork of the older dogmatism with ruin. Nor were these daring denials confined to the small circle of the scholars who still clung to him; with the practical ability which is so marked a feature of his character, Wyclif had organized, some few years before, an order of poor preachers, "the Simple Priests," whose coarse sermons and long russet dress moved the laughter of the clergy, but who now formed a priceless organization for the diffusion of their master's doctrines. How rapid their progress must have been we may see from the panic-struck exaggerations of their opponents; a few years later every second man you met, they complain, was a Lollard; the followers of Wyclif abounded everywhere and in all classes, among the baronage, in the cities, among the peasantry of the country-side, even in the monastic cell itself.

Oxford and the Lollards

"Lollard," a word which probably means much the same as "idle babbler," was the nickname of scorn with which the orthodox Churchmen chose to insult their assailants. But this rapid increase changed their scorn into vigorous action. Courtenay, now become Archbishop, summoned a council at Blackfriars, and formally submitted twenty-four propositions drawn from Wyclif's works. An earthquake in the midst of the proceedings terrified every prelate but the resolute Primate; the expulsion of ill humours from the earth, he said, was of good omen for the expulsion of ill humours from the Church; and the condemnation was pronounced. Then the Archbishop turned fiercely upon Oxford as the fount and centre of the new heresies. In an English sermon at St. Frideswide's, Nicholas Herford had asserted the truth of Wyclif's doctrines, and Courtenay ordered the Chancellor to silence him and his adherents on pain of being himself treated as a heretic. The Chancellor fell back on the liberties of the University, and appointed as preacher another Wycliffite, Repyngdon, who did not hesitate to style the Lollards "holy priests," and to affirm that they were protected by John of Gaunt. Party spirit meanwhile ran high among the students; the bulk of them sided with the Lollard leaders, and the Carmelite Peter Stokes, who had procured the Archbishop's letters, cowered panic-stricken in his chamber while the Chancellor, protected by an escort of a hundred townsmen, listened approvingly to Repyngdon's defiance. "I dare go no further," wrote the poor Friar to the Archbishop, "for fear of death;" but he soon mustered courage to descend into the schools where Repyngdon was now

1382

maintaining that the clerical order was "better when it was but nine years old than now that it has grown to a thousand years and more." The appearance, however, of scholars in arms again drove Stokes to fly in despair to Lambeth, while a new heretic in open Congregation maintained Wyclif's denial of Transubstantiation. "There is no idolatry," cried William James, "save in the Sacrament of the Altar." "You speak like a wise man," replied the Chancellor, Robert Rygge. Courtenay however was not the man to bear defiance tamely, and his summons to Lambeth wrested a submission from Rygge which was only accepted on his pledge to suppress the Lollardism of the University. "I dare not publish them, on fear of death," exclaimed the Chancellor when Chichele handed him his letters of condemnation. "Then is your University an open *fautor* of heretics," retorted the Primate, "if it suffers not the Catholic truth to be proclaimed within its bounds." The royal council supported the Archbishop's injunction, but the publication of the decrees at once set Oxford on fire. The scholars threatened death against the Friars, "crying that they wished to destroy the University." The masters suspended Henry Crump from teaching, as a troubler of the public peace, for calling the Lollards "heretics." The Crown however at last stepped roughly in to Courtenay's aid, and a royal writ ordered the instant banishment of all favourers of Wyclif, with the seizure and destruction of all Lollard books, on pain of forfeiture of the University's privileges. The threat produced its effect. Herford and Repyngdon appealed in vain to John of Gaunt for protection; the Duke himself denounced them as heretics against the Sacrament of the Altar, and after much evasion they were forced to make a formal submission. Within Oxford itself the suppression of Lollardism was complete, but with the death of religious freedom all trace of intellectual life suddenly disappears. The century which followed the triumphs of Courtenay is the most barren in its annals, nor was the sleep of the University broken till the advent of the New Learning restored to it some of the life and liberty which the Primate had so roughly trodden out.

The death of Wyclif

Nothing marks more strongly the grandeur of Wyclif's position as the last of the great schoolmen, than the reluctance of so bold a man as Courtenay even after his triumph over Oxford to take extreme measures against the head of Lollardry. Wyclif, though summoned, had made no appearance before the "Council of the Earthquake." "Pontius Pilate and Herod are made friends to-day," was his bitter comment on the new union which it proved to have sprung up between the prelates and the monastic orders who had so long been at variance with each other; "since they have made a heretic of Christ, it is an easy inference for them to count simple Christians heretics." He seems indeed to have been sick at the moment, but the announcement of the final sentence roused him to life again. "I shall not die," he is said to have cried at an earlier time when in grievous peril, "but live and declare the works of the Friars." He petitioned the King and Parliament that he

might be allowed freely to prove the doctrines he had put forth, and turning with characteristic energy to the attack of his assailants, he asked that all religious vows might be suppressed, that tithes might be diverted to the maintenance of the poor and the clergy maintained by the free alms of their flocks, that the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire might be enforced against the Papacy, that Churchmen might be declared incapable of secular offices, and imprisonment for excommunication cease. Finally, in the teeth of the council's condemnation, he demanded that the doctrine of the Eucharist which he advocated might be freely taught. If he appeared in the following year before the Convocation at Oxford, it was to perplex his opponents by a display of scholastic logic which permitted him to retire without any retractation of his sacramental heresy. For the time his opponents seemed satisfied with his expulsion from the University, but in his retirement at 1382
Lutterworth he was forging during these troubled years the great weapon which, wielded by other hands than his own, was to produce so terrible an effect on the triumphant hierarchy. An earlier translation of the whole Bible, in part of which he was aided by his scholar Herford, was being revised and brought to the second form, which is better known as "Wyclif's Bible," when death drew near. The appeal of the prelates to Rome was answered at last by a Brief ordering him to appear at the Papal Court. His failing strength exhausted itself in the cold sarcastic reply which explained that his refusal to comply with the summons simply sprang from broken health. "I am always glad," ran the ironical answer, "to explain my faith to any one, and above all to the Bishop of Rome; for I take it for granted that if it be orthodox he will confirm it, if it be erroneous he will correct it. I assume, too, that as chief Vicar of Christ upon earth the Bishop of Rome is of all mortal men most bound to the law of Christ's Gospel, for among the disciples of Christ a majority is not reckoned by simply counting heads in the fashion of this world, but according to the imitation of Christ on either side. Now Christ during His life upon earth was of all men the poorest, casting from Him all worldly authority. I deduce from these premisses, as a simple counsel of my own, that the Pope should surrender all temporal authority to the civil power and advise his clergy to do the same." The boldness of his words sprang perhaps from a knowledge that his end was near. The terrible strain on energies enfeebled by age and study had at last *Dec.* 31
brought its inevitable result, and a stroke of paralysis while Wyclif 1384
was hearing mass in his parish church of Lutterworth was followed in the next day by his quiet death.

1377 to 1381

Section IV.—The Peasant Revolt, 1377—1381

[*Authorities.*—The "Chronicon Angliæ" is the chief original source; see also the Continuator of Knighton, Froissart, and the Anonimal Chronicle of St. Mary's, York ("English Historical Review," 1898). For legislation, see the Statutes of the Realm, 1235-1713. As to the condition of land and labour, see Thorold Rogers, "History of Agriculture and Prices" and "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," which should be compared with later works on the Peasant Revolt, especially Réville, "Soulèvement des Travailleurs d'Angleterre"; Oman, "Great Revolt of 1381"; and Trevelyan, "England in the Age of Wycliffe."]

The English Manor

The religious revolution which we have been describing gave fresh impulse to a revolution of even greater importance, which had for a long time been changing the whole face of the country. The manorial system, on which the social organization of every rural part of England rested, had divided the land, for the purposes of cultivation and of internal order, into a number of large estates; in each of which about a fourth of the soil was usually retained by the owner of the manor as his demesne or home-farm, while the remainder was distributed, at the period we have reached, among tenants who were bound to render service to their lord. We know hardly anything of the gradual process by which these tenants had arisen out of the slave class who tilled the lands of the first English settlers. The slave, indeed, still remained, though the number of pure "serfs" bore a small proportion to the other cultivators of the soil. He was still, in the strictest sense, his lord's property; he was bound to the soil, he paid head-money for licence to remove from the estate in search of trade or hire, and a refusal to return on recall by his owner would have ended in his pursuit as a fugitive outlaw. But even this class had now acquired definite rights of its own; and although we still find instances of the sale of serfs "with their litter," or family, apart from the land they tilled, yet, in the bulk of cases, the amount of service due from the serf had become limited by custom, and, on its due rendering, his holding was practically as secure as that of the freest tenant on the estate. But at a time earlier than any record we possess the mass of the agricultural population had risen to a position of far greater independence than this, and now formed a class of peasant proprietors, inferior indeed to the older Teutonic freeman, but far removed from the original serf. Not only had their service and the time of rendering it become limited by custom, not only had the possession of each man's little hut with the plot around it, and the privilege of turning out a few cattle on the waste of the manor, passed from mere indulgences granted and withdrawn at a lord's caprice into rights which could be pleaded at law, but the class as a whole were no longer "in the power of the lord." The claim of the proprietors over peasants of this kind ended with the due rendering of their service in the cultivation of his demesne, and this service might be rendered either personally or by deputy. It was the nature

and extent of this labour-rent which determined the rank of the tenants among themselves. The villain, or free tenant, for instance, was only bound to gather in his lord's harvest and to aid in the ploughing and sowing of autumn and Lent, while the cottar, the bordar, and the labourer were bound to aid in the work of the home-farm throughout the year. The cultivation, indeed, of the home-farm, or as it was then called, the demesne, rested wholly with the tenants; it was by them that the great grange of the Lord was filled with sheaves, his sheep sheared, his grain malted, the wood hewn for his hall fire. The extent of these services rested wholly on tradition, but the number of teams, the fines, the reliefs, the heriots which the lord could claim was, at this time, generally entered on the court-roll of the manor, a copy of which became the title-deed of the tenants, and gave them the name of copy-holders, by which they became known at a later period. Disputes were easily settled by the steward of the manor on reference to this roll or on oral evidence of the custom at issue, but a social arrangement, eminently characteristic of the English spirit of compromise, generally secured a fair adjustment of the claims of employer and employed. It was the duty of the lord's bailiff to exact their dues from the tenantry, but his coadjutor in this office, the reeve or foreman of the manor, was chosen by the tenants themselves, and acted as the representative of their interests and their rights. 1377 to 1381

The first disturbance of the system of tenure which we have described sprang from the introduction of leases. The lord of the manor, instead of cultivating the demesne through his own bailiff, often found it more convenient and profitable to let the manor to a tenant at a given rent, payable either in money or in kind. Thus we find the manor of Sandon leased by the Chapter of St. Paul's at a very early period on a rent which comprised the payment of grain both for bread and ale, of alms to be distributed at the cathedral door, of wood to be used in its bakehouse and brewery, and of money to be spent in wages. It is to this system of leasing, or rather to the usual term for the rent it entailed (feorm, from the Latin *firma*), that we owe the words "farm" and "farmer," the growing use of which from the twelfth century marks the first step in the rural revolution which we are examining. It was a revolution which made little direct change in the manorial system, but its indirect effect in breaking the tie on which the feudal organization of the manor rested, that of the tenant's personal dependence on his lord, and in affording an opportunity by which the wealthier among the tenantry could rise to a position of apparent equality with their older masters, was of the highest importance. This earlier step, however, in the modification of the manorial system, by the rise of the Farmer-class, was soon followed by one of a far more serious character in the rise of the Free Labourer. Labour, whatever right it might have attained in other ways, was as yet in the strictest sense bound to the soil. Neither villain nor The Farmer and the Labourer

1377 to 1381

serf had any choice, either of a master or of a sphere of toil. The tenant was born, in fact, to his holding and to his lord. But the advance of society and the natural increase of population had for a long time been silently freeing the labourer from this local bondage. The influence of the Church had been exerted in promoting emancipation, as a work of piety, on all estates but its own. The fugitive bondsmen found freedom in a flight to chartered towns, where a residence during a year and a day conferred franchise. The increase of population had a far more serious effect. The numbers of the English people seem to have all but tripled since the Conquest, and as the law of gavel-kind, which was applicable to all landed estates not held by military tenure, divided the inheritance of the tenantry equally among their sons, the holding of each tenant and the services due from it became divided in a corresponding degree. The labour-rent thus became more difficult to enforce, at the very time when the increase of wealth among the tenantry and the rise of a new spirit of independence made it more burthensome to those who rendered it. It was probably from this cause that the commutation of the arrears of labour for a money payment, which had long prevailed on every estate, gradually developed into a general commutation of services. We have already witnessed the silent progress of this remarkable change in the case of St. Edmondsbury, but the practice soon became universal, and "malt-silver," "wood-silver," and "larder silver" were gradually taking the place of the older personal services on the court-rolls, at the opening of the fourteenth century. Under the Edwards the process of commutation was hastened by the necessities of the lords themselves. The luxury of the time, the splendour and pomp of chivalry, the cost of incessant campaigns, drained the purses of knight and baron, and the sale of freedom to the serf or exemption from services to the villain afforded an easy and tempting mode of refilling them. In this process Edward the Third himself led the way: commissioners were sent to royal estates for the especial purpose of selling manumissions to the King's serfs; and we still possess the names of those who were enfranchised with their families by a payment of hard cash in aid of the exhausted exchequer.

The Black Death

By this entire detachment of the serf from actual dependence on the land, the manorial system was even more radically changed than by the rise of the serf into a copyholder. The whole social condition of the country, in fact, was modified by the appearance of a new class. The rise of the free labourer had followed that of the farmer, labour was no longer bound to one spot or one master; it was free to hire itself to what employer, and to choose what field of employment it would. At the close of Edward's reign, in fact, the lord of a manor had been reduced over a large part of England to the position of a modern landlord, receiving a rental in money from his tenants, and dependent for the cultivation of his own demesne on hired labour; while the wealthier of the tenants

themselves often took the demesne on lease as its farmers, and thus created a new class intermediate between the larger proprietors and the customary tenants. The impulse towards a wider liberty given by the extension of this process of social change was soon seen on the appearance for the first time in our history of a spirit of social revolt. A Parliamentary statute of this period tells us that "villains and tenants of lands in villainage withdrew their customs and services from their lords, having attached themselves to other persons who maintained and abetted them; and who, under colour of exemplifications from Domesday of the manors and villas where they dwelt, claimed to be quit of all manner of services, either of their body or of their lands, and would suffer no distress or other course of justice to be taken against them; the villains aiding their maintainers by threatening the officers of their lords with peril to life and limb, as well by open assemblies as by confederacies to support each other." The copyholder was struggling to become a freeholder, and the farmer (perhaps) to be recognized as proprietor of the demesne which he held on lease. It was while this struggle was growing in intensity that a yet more formidable difficulty met the lords who had been driven by the enfranchisement of their serfs to rely on hired labour. Everything depended on the abundant supply of free labourers, and this abundance suddenly disappeared. The most terrible plague which the world ever witnessed advanced at this juncture from the East, and after devastating Europe from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Baltic, swooped at the close of 1348 upon Britain. The traditions of its destructiveness, and the panic-struck words of the statutes which followed it, have been more than justified by modern research. Of the three or four millions who then formed the population of England more than one-half were swept away in its repeated visitations. Its ravages were fiercest in the greater towns, where filthy and undrained streets afforded a constant haunt to leprosy and fever. In the burial ground which the piety of Sir Walter Manny purchased for the citizens of London, a spot whose site was afterwards marked by the Charter House, more than fifty thousand corpses are said to have been interred. Nearly sixty thousand people perished at Norwich, while in Bristol the living were hardly able to bury the dead. But the Black Death fell on the village almost as fiercely as on the town. More than one-half of the priests of Yorkshire are known to have perished; in the diocese of Norwich two-thirds of the parishes were left without incumbents. The whole organization of labour was thrown out of gear. The scarcity of hands made it difficult for the minor tenants to perform the services due for their lands, and only a temporary abandonment of half the rent by the landowners induced the farmers to refrain from the abandonment of their farms. For the time cultivation became impossible. "The sheep and cattle strayed through the fields and corn," says a contemporary, "and there were none left who could drive them." Even when the first

1377 to 1381

1377

The Black Death, 1349

1377 to 1381

burst of panic was over, the sudden rise of wages consequent on the enormous diminution in the supply of free labour, though accompanied by a corresponding rise in the price of food, rudely disturbed the course of industrial employments; harvests rotted on the ground, and fields were left untilled, not merely from scarcity of hands, but from the strife which now for the first time revealed itself between Capital and Labour.

The Statutes of Labourers

While the landowners of the country and the wealthier craftsmen of the town were threatened with ruin by what seemed to their age the extravagant demands of the new labour class, the country itself was torn with riot and disorder. The outbreak of lawless self-indulgence which followed everywhere in the wake of the plague told especially upon the "landless men," wandering in search of work, and for the first time masters of the labour market; and the wandering labourer or artisan turned easily into the

1349

"sturdy beggar," or the bandit of the woods. A summary redress for these evils was found by the Parliament and the Crown in a royal ordinance which was subsequently embodied in the Statute of Labourers. "Every man or woman," runs this famous Act, "of whatsoever condition, free or bond, able in body, and within the age of threescore years, . . . and not having of his own whereof he may live, nor land of his own about the tillage of which he may occupy himself, and not serving any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, and shall take only the wages which were accustomed to be taken in the neighbourhood where he is bound to serve" two years before the plague began. A refusal to obey was punished by imprisonment. Sterner measures were soon found to be necessary. Not only was the price of labour fixed by the Parliament of 1350, but the labour class was once more tied to the soil. The labourer was forbidden to quit the parish where he lived in search of better-paid employment; if he disobeyed he became a "fugitive," and subject to imprisonment at the hands of the justices of the peace. To enforce such a law literally must have been impossible, for corn had risen to so high a price that a day's labour at the old wages would not have purchased wheat enough for a man's support. But the landowners did not flinch from the attempt. The repeated re-enactment of the law shows the difficulty of applying it and the stubbornness of the struggle which it brought about. The fines and forfeitures which were levied for infractions of its provisions formed a large source of royal revenue, but so ineffectual were the original penalties that the runaway labourer was at last ordered to be branded with a hot iron on the forehead, while the harbouring of serfs in towns was rigorously put down. Nor was it merely the existing class of free labourers which was attacked by this reactionary movement. Not only was the process of emancipation suddenly checked, but the ingenuity of the lawyers, who were employed as stewards of each manor, was recklessly exercised in cancelling on grounds of informality manumissions and exemptions which had

passed without question, and in bringing back the villain and the serf into a bondage from which they held themselves freed. The attempt was the more galling that the cause had to be pleaded in the manor-court itself, and to be decided by the very officer whose interest it was to give judgment in favour of his lord. We can see the growth of a fierce spirit of resistance through the statutes which strove in vain to repress it. In the towns, where the system of forced labour was applied with even more rigour than in the country, strikes and combinations became frequent among the lower craftsmen. In the country the free labourers found allies in the villains whose freedom from manorial service was questioned, and throughout Kent and the eastern counties the gatherings of "fugitive serfs" were supported by an organized resistance and by large contributions of money on the part of the wealthier tenantry. The cry of the poor found a terrible utterance in the words of "a mad priest of Kent," as the courtly Froissart calls him, who had for twenty years been preaching a Lollardry of coarser and more popular type than that of Wyclif, and who found audience for his sermons in defiance of interdict and imprisonment in the stout yeomen who gathered in the Kentish churchyards. "Mad" as the landowners called him, it was in the preaching of John Ball that England first listened to the knell of feudalism and the declaration of the rights of man. "Good people," cried the preacher, "things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villains and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet, and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state." It was the tyranny of property that then as ever roused the defiance of socialism. A spirit fatal to the whole system of the Middle Ages breathed in the popular rhyme which condensed the levelling doctrine of John Ball: "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?"

1377 to 1381

The rhyme was running from lip to lip when a fresh instance of public oppression fanned the smouldering discontent into a flame. Edward the Third died in a dishonoured old age, robbed on his death-bed even of his finger-rings by the vile mistress to whom he had clung, and the accession of the child of the Black Prince, Richard the Second, revived the hopes of what in a political sense we must still call the popular party in the Legislature. The Parliament of 1377 resumed its work of reform, and boldly assumed the

1377

1377 to 1381 control of the expenditure by means of a standing committee of two burgesses of London: that of 1378 demanded and obtained an account of the mode in which its subsidies had been spent. But the real strength of these assemblies was directed, as we have seen, to the desperate struggle in which the proprietory classes, whom they exclusively represented, were striving to reduce the labourer into a fresh serfage. Meanwhile the shame of defeat abroad was added to the misery and discord at home. The French war ran its disastrous course: one English fleet was beaten by the Spaniards, a second sunk by a storm; and a campaign in the heart 1378 of France ended, like its predecessors, in disappointment and ruin. It was to defray the cost of these failures that the Parliament granted a fresh subsidy, to be raised by means of a poll-tax on every person in the realm. To such a tax the poorest man contributed as large a sum as the wealthiest, and the gross injustice of such an exaction set England on fire from sea to sea. In the eastern counties its levy gathered crowds of peasants together, armed with clubs, rusty swords, and bows; the royal commissioners sent to repress the tumult were driven from the field, and a party of insurgents in Essex gave the signal for open revolt by crossing the Thames under Jack Straw and calling Kent to arms. Canterbury, where "the whole town was of their sort," threw open its gates, plundered the Archbishop's palace, and dragged John Ball from its prison, while a hundred thousand Kentish-men gathered round Wat Tyler, a soldier who had served in the French wars, and who was at once recognized as the head of the insurrection. Quaint rhymes passed through the country, and served as summons to the revolt, which soon extended from the eastern and midland counties over all England south of the Thames. "John Ball," *June*, 1381 ran one, "greeteth you all, and doth for to understand he hath rung your bell. Now right and might, will and skill, God speed every dele." "Help truth," ran another, "and truth shall help you! Now reigneth pride in price, and covetise is counted wise, and lechery withouten shame, and gluttony withouten blame. Envy reigneth with treason, and sloth is take in great season. God do bote, for now is tyme!" We recognize Ball's hand in the yet more stirring missives of "Jack the Miller" and "Jack the Carter." "Jack Miller asketh help to turn his mill aright. He hath grounden small, small: the King's Son of Heaven he shall pay for all. Look thy mill go aright with the four sailes, and the post stand with steadfastness. With right and with might, with skill and with will; let might help right, and skill go before will, and right before might, so goeth our mill aright." "Jack Carter," ran the companion missive, "prays you all that ye make a good end of that ye have begun, and do well, and aye better and better: for at the even men heareth the day." "Falseness and guile," sang Jack Trewman, "have reigned too long, and truth hath been set under a lock, and falseness and guile reigneth in every stock. No man may come truth to, but if he sing 'si dedero.' True love

is away that was so good, and clerks for wealth work them woe. God do bote, for now is tyme." In the rude jingle of these lines began for England the literature of political controversy: they are the first predecessors of the pamphlets of Milton and of Burke. Rough as they are, they express clearly enough the mingled passions which met in the revolt of the peasants: their longing for a right rule, for plain and simple justice; their scorn of the immorality of the nobles and the infamy of the court: their resentment at the perversion of the law to the cause of oppression. The revolt spread like wildfire over the country: Norfolk and Suffolk, Cambridge and Hertfordshire rose in arms: from Sussex and Surrey the insurrection extended as far as Winchester and Somerset. But the strength of the rising lay in the Kentish-men, who were marching on London. As they poured on to Blackheath, every lawyer who fell into their hands was put to death; "not till all these were killed would the land enjoy its old freedom again," the peasants shouted as they fired the houses of the stewards and flung the records of the manor-courts into the flames. The whole population joined them as they marched along, while the nobles were paralyzed with fear, and the Duke of Lancaster fled before the popular hatred over the border, and took refuge in Scotland. The young King—he was but a boy of sixteen—addressed them from a boat on the river; but the refusal of his Council under the guidance of Archbishop Sudbury to allow him to land kindled the peasants to fury, and with cries of "Treason" the great mass rushed on London. Its gates were flung open by the poorer artisans within the city, and the stately palace of John of Gaunt at the Savoy, the new inn of the lawyers at the Temple, the houses of the foreign merchants, were soon in a blaze. But the insurgents, as they proudly boasted, were "seekers of truth and justice, not thieves or robbers," and a plunderer found carrying off a silver vessel from the sack of the Savoy was flung with his spoil into the flames. The general terror was shown ludicrously enough on the following day, when a daring band of peasants, under Tyler himself, forced their way into the Tower, and taking the panic-stricken knights of the garrison in rough horse-play by the beard, promised to be their equals and good comrades in the time to come. But the horse-play changed into dreadful earnest when Archbishop Sudbury and the Prior of St. John who had hindered the King from a conference with the peasants were discovered in the chapel; the primate was dragged from his sanctuary and beheaded on Tower Hill, and the same vengeance was wreaked on the treasurer and the chief commissioner in the levy of the hated poll-tax. Meanwhile the King found the mass of the peasants waiting for a conference with him without the city at Mile-End. "I am your King and Lord, good people," the boy began with a fearlessness which marked his whole bearing throughout the crisis; "what will ye?" "We will that you free us for ever," shouted the peasants, "us and our lands; and that we be never named nor

1377 to 1381

1377 to 1381

held for serfs." "I grant it," replied Richard; and he bade them go home, pledging himself at once to issue charters of freedom and amnesty. A shout of joy welcomed the promise. Throughout the day more than thirty clerks were busied writing letters of pardon and emancipation, and with these the mass of the insurgents dispersed quietly to their homes. It was with such a charter that William Grindecobbe returned to St. Albans, and breaking at the head of the townsmen into the abbey precincts, summoned the abbot to deliver up the charters which bound the town in serfage to his house. But a more striking proof of its servitude remained in the millstones, which after a long suit at law had been surrendered to the abbey, and placed within its cloister as a triumphant witness that no burgess held the right of grinding corn within the bounds of its domain. The men of St. Albans now burst the cloister gates, and tearing the millstones from the floor, broke them into small pieces, "like blessed bread in church," so that each might have something to show of the day when their freedom was won again.

Suppression of the Revolt

Thirty thousand peasants, however, still remained with Wat Tyler to watch over the fulfilment of the royal pledge, and it was this body which Richard by a mere chance encountered the next morning at Smithfield. Hot words passed between his train and the peasant leader, who had advanced to a fresh conference with the King; and a threat brought on a brief scuffle in which the Mayor of London, William Walworth, struck Tyler with his dagger to the ground. "Kill, kill," shouted the crowd, "they have killed our Captain." "What need ye, my masters?" cried the boy King, as he rode boldly to the front, "I am your Captain and your King! Follow me." The hopes of the peasants centred in the young sovereign: one object of their rising had been to free him from the evil counsellors who, as they believed, abused his youth, and they now followed him with a touching loyalty and trust to the Tower. His mother welcomed him with tears of joy. "Rejoice and praise God," the boy answered, "for I have recovered to-day my heritage which was lost, and the realm of England." The panic of the nobles had in fact passed away, and six thousand knights gathered round the King, eager for blood, but Richard was as yet true to his word. He contented himself with issuing the promised letters of freedom and dismissing the peasants to their homes. The revolt, indeed, was far from being at an end. A strong body of peasants occupied St. Albans. In the eastern counties fifty thousand men forced the gates of St. Edmundsbury and wrested from the trembling monks a charter of enfranchisement for the town. Littester, a dyer of Norwich, headed a strong mass of peasants, under the title of the King of the Commons, and compelled the nobles he captured to act as his meat-tasters and to serve him on their knees during his repast. But the death of Tyler gave courage to the nobles, while it seems to have robbed the action of the peasants of all concert and decision. The warlike

Bishop of Norwich fell lance in hand on the rebel camp in his own diocese, and scattered them at the first shock: while the King, with an army of 40,000 men, spread terror by the ruthlessness of his executions as he marched in triumph through Kent and Essex. But the stubbornness of the resistance which he met showed the temper of the people. The villagers of Billericay demanded from the King the same liberties as their lords, and on his refusal threw themselves into the woods and fought two hard fights before they were reduced to submission. It was only by threats of death that verdicts of guilty could be wrung from the Essex jurors when the leaders of the revolt were brought before them. Grindecobbe was offered his life if he would persuade his followers at St. Albans to restore the charters they had wrung from the monks. He turned bravely to his fellow-townsmen and bade them take no thought for his trouble. "If I die," he said, "I shall die for the cause of freedom we have won, counting myself happy to end my life by such a martyrdom. Do then to-day as you would have done had I been killed yesterday." But the stubborn will of the conquered was met by as stubborn a will in their conquerors. The royal council indeed showed its sense of the danger of a mere policy of resistance by submitting the question of enfranchisement to the Parliament which assembled on the suppression of the revolt with words which suggested a compromise. "If you desire to enfranchise and set at liberty the said serfs," ran the royal message, "by your common assent, as the King has been informed that some of you desire, he will consent to your prayer." But no thoughts of compromise influenced the landowners in their reply. The King's grant and letters, the Parliament answered with perfect truth, were legally null and void: their serfs were their goods, and the King could not take their goods from them but by their own consent. "And this consent," they ended, "we have never given and never will give, were we all to die in one day." 1377 to 1381

Section V.—Richard the Second, 1381—1399

[*Authorities.*— To those mentioned under earlier sections may be added the anonymous "Historia Vitæ et Regni Ricardi II.," the "Annales Ricardi II. et Henrici IV." (Rolls Series), and for views favourable to Richard, Jean Créton, "Histoire du Roy d'Angleterre, Richard II.," and the "Chronique de la traison et mort de Richard II." (English Historical Society). The Calendar of State Papers for Richard II.'s reign has been published. Wright's "Political Songs" illustrate popular feeling. "Piers Ploughman" has been edited by Skeat. In addition to Stubbs, "Constitutional History," and to the modern works on special points, already mentioned, Wallon's "Histoire de Richard II." is of value, though written before various original authorities were available. For the deposition of Richard II., the best account is that given by Adam of Usk (edited Maunde Thompson).

All the darker and sterner aspects of the age which we have been viewing, its social revolt, its moral and religious awakening, the misery of the peasant, the protest of the Lollard, are painted with Piers the Plough-man

1381 to 1399

a terrible fidelity in the poem of William Longland. Nothing brings more vividly home to us the social chasm which in the fourteenth century severed the rich from the poor than the contrast between the "Complaint of Piers the Ploughman" and the "Canterbury Tales." The world of wealth and ease and laughter through which the courtly Chaucer moves with eyes downcast as in a pleasant dream is a far-off world of wrong and of ungodliness to the gaunt poet of the poor. Born probably in Shropshire, where he had been put to school and received minor orders as a clerk, "Long Will," as Longland was nicknamed for his tall stature, found his way at an early age to London, and earned a miserable livelihood there by singing placebos and diriges in the stately funerals of his day. Men took the silent moody clerk for a madman; his bitter poverty quickened the defiant pride that made him loth—as he tells us—to bow to the gay lords and dames who rode decked in silver and minivere along the Cheap, or to exchange a "God save you" with the law serjeants as he passed their new house in the Temple. His world is the world of the poor: he dwells on the poor man's life, on his hunger and toil, his rough revelry and his despair with the narrow intensity of a man who has no outlook beyond it. The narrowness, the misery, the monotony of the life he paints reflect themselves in his verse. It is only here and there that a love of nature or a grim earnestness of wrath quicken his rhyme into poetry; there is not a gleam of the bright human sympathy of Chaucer, of his fresh delight in the gaiety, the tenderness, the daring of the world about him, of his picturesque sense of even its coarsest contrasts, of his delicate irony, of his courtly wit. The cumbrous allegory, the tedious platitudes, the rhymed texts from Scripture which form the staple of Longland's work, are only broken here and there by phrases of a shrewd common sense, by bitter outbursts, by pictures of a broad Hogarthian humour. What chains one to the poem is its deep undertone of sadness: the world is out of joint and the gaunt rhymer who stalks silently along the Strand has no faith in his power to put it right. His poem covers indeed an age of shame and suffering such as England had never known, for if its first brief sketch appeared two years after the Peace of Bretigny its completion may be dated at the close of

1362 to 1380

the reign of Edward the Third, and its final issue preceded but by a single year the Peasant Revolt. Londoner as he is, Will's fancy flies far from the sin and suffering of the great city to a May-morning in the Malvern Hills. "I was wery forwandered and went me to rest under a broad bank by a burn side, and as I lay and leaned and looked in the water I slumbered in a sleeping, it sweyved (sounded) so merry." Just as Chaucer gathers the typical figures of the world he saw into his pilgrim train, so the dreamer gathers into a wide field his army of traders and chafferers, of hermits and solitaries, of minstrels, "japers and jinglers," bidders and beggars, ploughmen that "in setting and in sowing swonken (toil) full hard," pilgrims "with their wenches after," weavers

and labourers, burgess and bondman, lawyer and scrivener, court-haunting bishops, friars, and pardoners "parting the silver" with the parish priest. Their pilgrimage is not to Canterbury, but to Truth; their guide to Truth neither clerk nor priest but Peterkin the Ploughman, whom they find ploughing in his field. He it is who bids the knight no more wrest gifts from his tenant nor misdo with the poor. "Though he be thine underling here, well may hap in heaven that he be worthier set and with more bliss than thou. . . . For in charnel at church churles be evil to know, or a knight from a knave there." The gospel of equality is backed by the gospel of labour. The aim of the Ploughman is to work, and to make the world work with him. He warns the labourer as he warns the knight. Hunger is God's instrument in bringing the idlest to toil, and Hunger waits to work her will on the idler and the waster. On the eve of the great struggle between wealth and labour Longland stands alone in his fairness to both, in his shrewd political and religious common sense. In the face of the popular hatred towards John of Gaunt, he paints the Duke in a famous apologue as the cat who, greedy as she might be, at any rate keeps the noble rats from utterly devouring the mice of the people. The poet is loyal to the Church, but his pilgrimage is not to Walsingham, but to Truth; he proclaims a righteous life to be better than a host of indulgences, and God sends His pardon to Piers when priests dispute it. But he sings as a man conscious of his loneliness and without hope. It is only in a dream that he sees Corruption, "Lady Meed," brought to trial and the world repenting at the preaching of Reason. In the waking life Reason finds no listeners. The poet himself is looked upon—he tells us bitterly—as a madman. There is a terrible despair in the close of his later poem, where the triumph of Christ is only followed by the reign of Antichrist; where Contrition slumbers amidst the revel of Death and Sin; and Conscience, hard beset by Pride and Sloth, rouses himself with a last effort, and seizing his pilgrim staff wanders over the world to find Piers Ploughman.

1381 to 1399

The strife indeed which Longland would have averted raged only the fiercer after the repression of the Peasant Revolt. The Statutes of Labourers, effective as they proved in sowing hatred between rich and poor, and in creating a mass of pauperism for later times to deal with, were powerless for their immediate ends, either in reducing the actual rate of wages or in restricting the mass of floating labour to definite areas of employment. During the century and a half after the Peasant Revolt villainage died out so rapidly that it became a rare and antiquated thing. A hundred years after the Black Death, we learn from a high authority that the wages of an English labourer "commanded twice the amount of the necessaries of life which could have been obtained for the wages paid under Edward the Third." The statement is corroborated by the incidental descriptions of the life of the working classes which we find in Piers Ploughman. Labourers, Longland

The Social Strife

1881 to 1899

tells us, "that have no land to live on but their hands," disdained to live on penny ale or bacon, but demanded "fresh flesh or fish, fried or bake, and that hot or hotter for chilling of their maw." The market was still in fact in the labourer's hands, in spite of statutes; "and but if he be highly hired else will he chide and wail the time that he was made a workman." The poet saw clearly that as population rose to its normal rate times such as these would pass away. "Whiles Hunger was their master here would none of them chide nor strive against *his* stature, so sternly he looked: and I warn you, workmen, win while ye may, for Hunger hitherward hasteth him fast." But even at the time when he wrote there were seasons of the year during which employment for this floating mass of labour was hard to find. In the long interval between harvest-tide and harvest-tide, work and food were alike scarce in the mediæval homestead. "I have no penny," says Piers the Ploughman in such a season, in lines which give us the picture of a farm of the day, "pullets for to buy, nor neither geese nor pigs, but two green cheeses, a few curds and cream, and an oaten cake, and two loaves of beans and bran baken for my children. I have no salt bacon nor no cooked meat collops for to make, but I have parsley and leeks and many cabbage plants, and eke a cow and a calf, and a cart-mare to draw a-field my dung while the drought lasteth, and by this livelihood we must all live till Lammas-tide (August), and by that I hope to have harvest in my croft." But it was not till Lammas-tide that high wages and the new corn bade "Hunger go to sleep," and during the long spring and summer the free labourer, and the "waster that will not work but wander about, that will eat no bread but the finest wheat, nor drink but of the best and brownest ale," was a source of social and political danger. "He grieveth him against God and grudgeth against Reason, and then curseth he the King and all his Council after such law to allow labourers to grieve." The terror of the landowners expressed itself in legislation which was a fitting sequel of the Statutes of Labourers. They forbade the child of any tiller of the soil to be apprenticed in a town. They prayed Richard to ordain "that no bondman nor bondwoman shall place their children at school, as has been done, so as to advance their children in the world by their going into the Church." The new colleges which were being founded at the two Universities at this moment closed their gates upon villains. It was the failure of such futile efforts to effect their aim which drove the energy of the great proprietors into a new direction, and in the end revolutionized the whole agricultural system of the country. Sheep farming required fewer hands than tillage, and the scarcity and high price of labour tended to throw more and more land into sheep-farms. In the decrease of personal service, as villainage died away, it became the interest of the lord to diminish the number of tenants on his estate as it had been before his interest to maintain it, and he did this by massing the small allotments together into larger

holdings. By this course of eviction the number of the free-labour class was enormously increased while the area of employment was diminished; and the social danger from vagabondage and the "sturdy beggar" grew every day greater till it brought about the despotism of the Tudors. 1381 to 1399

This social danger mingled with the yet more formidable religious peril which sprang from the party violence of the later Lollardry. The persecution of Courtenay had deprived the religious reform of its more learned adherents and of the support of the University, while Wyclif's death had robbed it of its head at a moment when little had been done save a work of destruction. From that moment Lollardism ceased to be in any sense an organized movement, and crumbled into a general spirit of revolt. All the religious and social discontent of the times floated instinctively to this new centre; the socialist dreams of the peasantry, the new and keener spirit of personal morality, the hatred of the friars, the jealousy of the great lords towards the prelacy, the fanaticism of the Puritan zealot were blended together in a common hostility to the Church and a common resolve to substitute personal religion for its dogmatic and ecclesiastical system. But it was this want of organization, this looseness and fluidity of the new movement, that made it penetrate through every class of society. Women as well as men became the preachers of the new sect. Its numbers increased till to the frenzied panic of the Churchmen it seemed as if every third man in the streets was a Lollard. The movement had its own schools, its own books; its pamphlets were passed everywhere from hand to hand; scurrilous ballads, in which it revived old attacks of "Golias" in the Angevin times upon the wealth and luxury of the clergy, were sung at every corner. Nobles, like the Earl of Salisbury, and at a later time Sir John Oldcastle, placed themselves openly at the head of the cause and threw open their gates as a refuge for its missionaries. London in its hatred of the clergy was fiercely Lollard, and defended a Lollard preacher who had ventured to advocate the new doctrines from the pulpit of St. Paul's. Its mayor, John of Northampton, showed the influence of the new morality in the Puritan spirit with which he dealt with the morals of the city. Compelled to act, as he said, by the remissness of the clergy, who connived for money at every kind of debauchery, he arrested the loose women, cut off their hair, and carted them through the streets as an object of public scorn. But the moral spirit of the new movement, though infinitely its grander side, was less dangerous to the Church than its open repudiation of the older doctrines and systems of Christendom. Out of the floating mass of opinion which bore the name of Lollardry one great faith gradually evolved itself, a faith in the sole authority of the Bible as a source of religious truth. The translation of Wyclif did its work. Scripture, complains a canon of Leicester, "became a vulgar thing, and more open to lay folk and women that knew how to read than it is wont to be to clerks themselves." Conse- Lollardry

1381 to 1390

quences which Wyclif had perhaps shrunk from drawing were boldly drawn by his disciples. The Church was declared to have become apostate, its priesthood was denounced as no priesthood, its sacraments as idolatry. It was in vain that the clergy attempted to stifle the new movement by their old weapon of persecution. The jealousy entertained by the baronage and gentry of every pretension of the Church to secular power foiled its efforts to make persecution effective. At the moment of the Peasant Revolt, Courtenay procured the enactment of a statute which commissioned the sheriffs to seize all persons convicted before the bishops of preaching heresy. But the statute was repealed in the next session, and the Commons added to the bitterness of the blow by their protest that they considered it "in nowise their interest to be more under the jurisdiction of the prelates or more bound by them than their ancestors had been in times past." Heresy indeed was still a felony by the common law, and there were earlier instances in our history of the punishment of heretics by the fire. But the limitation of each bishop's jurisdiction within the limits of his own diocese made it almost impossible to arrest the wandering preachers of the new doctrine, and the civil punishment—even if it had been sanctioned by public opinion—seems to have long fallen into desuetude. Experience proved to the prelates that no sheriff would arrest on the mere warrant of an ecclesiastical officer, and that no royal court would issue the old writ "for the burning of a heretic" on a bishop's requisition. But powerless as the efforts of the Church were for purposes of repression, they were effective in rousing the temper of the Lollards into a bitter and fanatical hatred of their persecutors. The Lollard teachers directed their fiercest invectives against the wealth and secularity

1395

of the great Churchmen. In a formal petition to Parliament they mingled denunciations of the riches of the clergy with an open profession of disbelief in transubstantiation, priesthood, pilgrimages, and image worship, and a demand, which illustrates the strange medley of opinions which jostled together in the new movement, that war might be declared unchristian, and that trades such as those of the goldsmith or the armourer, which were contrary to apostolical poverty, might be banished from the realm. They contended (and it is remarkable that a Parliament of the next reign adopted the statement) that from the superfluous revenues of the Church, if once they were applied to purposes of general utility, the King might maintain fifteen earls, fifteen hundred knights, and six thousand squires, besides endowing a hundred hospitals for the relief of the poor.

The French Wars

The distress of the landowners, the general disorganization of the country, in every part of which bands of marauders were openly defying the law, the panic of the Church and of society at large as the projects of the Lollards shaped themselves into more daring and revolutionary forms, added a fresh keenness to the national discontent at the languid and inefficient prosecution of the war.

France was, in fact, mistress of the seas; Guienne lay at her mercy, and the northern frontier of England itself was flung open to her by the alliance of the Scots. The landing of a French force in the Forth roused the whole country to a desperate effort, and a large and well-equipped army of Englishmen penetrated as far as Edinburgh in the vain hope of bringing their enemy to battle. A more terrible blow followed in the submission of Ghent to the French forces, the reception of a French prince by Flanders as its Count, and the loss of the one remaining market for English commerce; while the forces which should have been employed in saving it, and in the protection of the English shores against the threat of invasion, were squandered by John of Gaunt on the Spanish frontier in pursuit of a visionary crown, which he claimed in his wife's right, the daughter of Pedro the Cruel. But even calamities such as these galled the national pride less than the peace tendency of the court. Michael de la Pole, the Earl of Suffolk, had stood since the suppression of the revolt at the head of the royal councils, and the whole aim of his policy had been to bring about a reconciliation with France. Unsuccessful as they were in effecting this object, his efforts roused the resentment of the nobles, and at the instigation of the Duke of Gloucester, who, in the absence of his brother, John of Gaunt, had placed himself at its head, the Parliament demanded the dismissal of the minister and the transfer of the royal power to a permanent Council chosen by the lords. The resistance of the young King was crushed by the appearance of the baronage in arms, and a bill of impeachment hurried into exile and to death both the Earl and the judges of his party who had pronounced the rule of the Council to be in itself illegal. It may have been the violence of these measures which restored popular sympathy to the royal cause, for hardly a year had passed when Richard found himself strong enough to break down by a word the government against which he had struggled so vainly. In the great Easter Council he suddenly asked his uncle to tell him how old he was. "Your Highness," replied Gloucester, "is in your twenty-second year." "Then I am old enough to manage my own affairs," said Richard, coolly. "I have been longer under guardianship than any ward in my realm. I thank you for your past services, my lords, but I need them no longer."

1381 to 1399

1385

1388

For nine years the young King wielded the power which thus passed quietly into his hands with singular wisdom and good fortune. On the one hand he carried his peace policy into effect by a succession of negotiations which brought about the conclusion of a truce for four years, and this period of rest was lengthened to twenty-eight by a subsequent agreement on his marriage with Isabella, the daughter of Charles the Fifth of France. On the other he announced his resolve to rule by the advice of his Parliament, submitted to its censure, and consulted it on all matters of importance. In a vigorous campaign he pacified Ireland while redressing the abuses of its government; and the Lollard troubles which

Richard II. 1388 to 1397

1381 to 1399

had broken out during his absence were at once repressed on his return. But the brilliant abilities which Richard shared with the rest of the Plantagenets were marred by a fitful inconstancy and a mean spirit of revenge. His uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, remained at the head of the war-party; his turbulent opposition to the peace policy of the King, and his resistance to the French marriage which embodied it, may have made a conflict inevitable; but the readiness with which Richard seized on the opportunity of provoking such a contest shows the bitterness with which during the long years which had passed since the death of Suffolk he had brooded over his projects of vengeance. The Parliament which had been employed by Gloucester to humble the Crown was now used to crush its opponents. The pardons granted nine years before were recalled; the commission of Regency declared to have been illegal, and it was ruled that the enactment of such a measure rendered its promoters guilty of treason. The blow was ruthlessly followed up. When the summons to answer to his impeachment reached the Duke, he was found dead in his prison at Calais: while his chief supporter, Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was

1398

condemned to exile, and the nobles of his party to imprisonment. The measures introduced into the Parliament of the following year showed that from a mere project of revenge Richard's designs had widened into a definite plan of absolute government. He was freed from Parliamentary control by the grant to him of a tax upon wool for the term of his life. His next step got rid of Parliament itself. A committee of twelve peers and six commoners was appointed in Parliament, with power to continue their sittings after its dissolution and to "examine and determine all matters and subjects which had been moved in the presence of the king with all the dependencies thereof." The aim of Richard was to supersede by means of this permanent commission the body from which it originated: he at once employed it to determine causes and enact laws, and forced from every tenant of the Crown an oath to recognize the validity of its acts and to oppose any attempts to alter or revoke them. With such an engine at his command the King was absolute, and with the appearance of absolutism the temper of his reign suddenly changed. A system of forced loans, the sale of charters of pardon to Gloucester's adherents, the outlawry of seventeen counties at once on the plea that they had supported his enemies, a reckless interference with the course of justice and the independence of the judges, roused into new life the social and political discontent which was threatening the very existence of the Crown.

The Lancastrian Revolution

By his good government and by his evil government alike Richard had succeeded in alienating every class of his subjects. He had estranged the nobles by his peace policy, the landowners by his refusal to sanction the insane measures of repression they directed against the labourer, the merchant class by his illegal exactions, and the Church by his shelter of the Lollards. Not only

had the persecution of the new sect been foiled by the inactivity of the royal officers and the repeal of the bills of heresy introduced by the Primate, but Lollardism found favour in the very precincts of the court. It was through the patronage of Richard's first queen, Anne of Bohemia, that the tracts and Bible of the Reformer had been introduced into her native land to give rise to the remarkable movement which found its earliest leaders in John Huss and Jerome of Prague. The head of the sect, the Earl of Salisbury, was of all the English nobles the most favoured by and the most faithful to the King. Richard stood almost alone in fact in his realm, but even this accumulated mass of hatred might have failed to crush him had not an act of jealousy and tyranny placed an able and unscrupulous leader at the head of the national discontent. Henry, Earl of Derby and Duke of Hereford, the eldest son of John of Gaunt, though he had taken part against his royal cousin in the earlier troubles of his reign, had loyally supported him in his recent measures against Gloucester. No sooner, however, were these measures successful than Richard turned his new power against the more dangerous House of Lancaster, and availing himself of a quarrel between the Dukes of Hereford and Norfolk, in which each party bandied accusations of treason against the other, banished both from the realm. Banishment was soon followed by outlawry, and on his father's death Henry found himself deprived both of the title and estates of his house. At the moment when he had thus driven his cousin to despair, Richard crossed into Ireland to complete the work of conquest and organization which he had begun there; and Archbishop Arundel, an exile like himself, urged the Earl to take advantage of the King's absence for the recovery of his rights. Eluding the vigilance of the French Court, at which he had taken shelter, Henry landed with a handful of men on the coast of Yorkshire, where he was at once joined by the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, the heads of the great houses of the Percies and the Nevilles; and, with an army which grew as he advanced, entered triumphantly into London. The Duke of York, whom the King had left regent, united his forces to those of Henry, and when Richard landed at Milford Haven he found the kingdom lost. His own army dispersed as it landed, and the deserted King fled in disguise to North Wales to find a second force which the Earl of Salisbury had gathered for his support already disbanded. Invited to a conference with the Duke of Lancaster at Flint, he saw himself surrounded by the rebel forces. "I am betrayed," he cried, as the view of his enemies burst on him from the hill; "there are pennons and banners in the valley." But it was too late for retreat. Richard was seized and brought before his cousin. "I am come before my time," said Lancaster, "but I will show you the reason. Your people, my lord, complain that for the space of twenty years you have ruled them harshly: however, if it please God, I will help you to rule them better." "Fair cousin," replied the King, "since it pleases you, it pleases me well."

1381 to 1399

1399

1381 to 1399

But Henry's designs went far beyond a share in the government of the realm. The Parliament which assembled in Westminster Hall received with shouts of applause a formal paper in which Richard resigned the Crown as one incapable of reigning and worthy for his great demerits to be deposed. The resignation was, in fact, confirmed by a solemn Act of Deposition. The coronation oath was read, and a long impeachment, which stated the breach of the promises made in it, was followed by a solemn vote of both Houses which removed Richard from the state and authority of King. According to the strict rules of hereditary descent as construed by the feudal lawyers, by an assumed analogy with the descent of ordinary estates, the crown would now have passed to a house which had at an earlier period played a leading part in the revolutions of the Edwards. The great-grandson of the Mortimer who brought about the deposition of Edward the Second had married the daughter and heiress of Lionel of Clarence, the third son of Edward the Third. The childlessness of Richard and the death of Edward's second son without issue placed Edmund, his grandson by this marriage, first among the claimants of the crown; but he was a child of six years old, the strict rule of hereditary descent had never received any formal recognition in the case of the Crown, and precedent had established the right of Parliament to choose in such a case a successor among any other members of the Royal House. With the characteristic subtlety of his temper, however, Henry professed to disguise this choice of the nation by the assertion of a second right arising from a supposed conquest of the realm. He rose from his seat and solemnly challenged the crown, "as that I am descended by regal line of blood coming from the good lord King Henry the Third, and through that right that God of His Grace hath sent me with help of my kin and of my friends to recover it: the which realm was in point to be undone for default of governance and undoing of good laws." Whatever defects such a claim might present were more than covered by the solemn recognition of Parliament. The two Archbishops, taking the new sovereign by the hand, seated him upon the throne, and Henry in emphatic words ratified the compact between himself and his people. "Sirs," he said to the prelates, lords, knights, and burgesses gathered round him, "I thank God and you, spiritual and temporal, and all estates of the land: and do you to wit it is not my will that any man think that by way of conquest I would disinherit any of his heritage, franchises, or other rights that he ought to have, nor put him out of the good that he has and has had by the good laws and customs of the realm, except those persons that have been against the good purpose and the common profit of the realm."

It has been contended, since Green wrote, that the poem of Piers Ploughman was not the work of a single individual, and that Longland or Langland never existed.

The effect of the Peasant Revolt was rather to retard than to accelerate

the decline of villainage, the tendency after the suppression of the revolt being to insist upon villain service. Michael de la Pole fled to France as a result of the baronial attack upon him, but died at Paris about a year later. The favour shown by Richard to De Vere, Earl of Oxford, was a further factor in rousing the hostility of the nobles. The policy of the Lords Appellant, Gloucester and his friends, seems to have been throughout mainly selfish. 1399 to 1422

York was unable to resist the progress of Henry after his landing, and declared his belief in Henry's professions of loyalty to Richard. In claiming the throne as descended from Henry III., Henry IV. was possibly alluding to the legend that Edmund of Lancaster was the elder brother of Edward I., but had been excluded from the throne on the ground of his deformity.

Section VI.—The House of Lancaster, 1399—1422

[*Authorities.*—The chronicles of this period of English history become increasingly defective. The collection which has gone by the name of Walsingham; the "Annales Ricardi II. et Henrici IV."; the "Chronicle, edited Giles," and the "Chronicle, edited Davies"; Adam of Usk; Otterbourne, "Chronica," the "Translator of Livius," "Life of Henry V.," and Elmham, "Vita et Gesta Henrici V.," may be mentioned. The Rolls of Parliament are of great value. Among modern works, Ramsay, "Lancaster and York," gives a complete account of the whole period. For the French war, see Monstrelet, "Chronique" (Société de l'Histoire de France), and among modern works, Puiseux, "Siège de Rouen."]

The Suppression of Lollardy

Raised to the throne by a Parliamentary revolution and resting its claims on a Parliamentary title, the House of Lancaster was precluded by its very position from any resumption of the last struggle for independence on the part of the Crown which had culminated in the bold effort of Richard the Second. During no period of our early history were the powers of the two Houses so frankly recognized. The tone of Henry the Fourth till the very close of his reign is that of humble compliance with the prayers of the Parliament, and even his imperious successor shrank almost with timidity from any conflict with it. But the Crown had been bought by other pledges less noble than that of constitutional rule. The support of the nobles had been secured by a tacit engagement on Henry's part to reverse the peace policy of his predecessor and to renew the fatal war with France. The support of the Church had been purchased by the more terrible promise of persecution. The last pledge was speedily redeemed. In the first Convocation of his reign Henry announced himself as the protector of the Church, and ordered the prelates to take measures for the suppression of heresy and of the wandering preachers. The hindrances which had neutralized the efforts of the bishops were taken away by an Act which gave them power to arrest on common rumour, to put the accused to purgation, and to punish with imprisonment. These, however, were but preludes to the more formidable provisions of the Statute of Heretics. By the provisions of this infamous Act, bishops were 1401

1399 to 1422 now not only permitted to arrest and imprison, so long as their heresy should last, all preachers of heresy, all schoolmasters infected with heretical teaching, all owners or writers of heretical books, but a refusal to abjure, or a relapse after abjuration, enabled them to hand over the heretic to the civil officers, and by these—so ran the first legal enactment of religious bloodshed which defiled our statute book—he was to be burnt on a high place before the people. The statute was hardly passed before William Sawtre, who had quitted a Norfolk rectory to spread the new Lollardism, became its first victim. A layman, John Badbie, was committed to the flames in the presence of the Prince of Wales for a denial of transubstantiation. The groans of the sufferer were taken for a recantation, and the Prince ordered the fire to be plucked away; but the offer of life and of a pension failed to break the spirit of the Lollard, and he was again hurled back to his doom. It was probably the fierce resentment of the Reformers which gave life to the incessant revolts which threatened the throne of Henry the Fourth. The mere maintenance of his power through the troubled years of his reign is the best proof of the King's ability. A conspiracy of Richard's half-brothers, the Earls of Huntingdon and Kent, was hardly suppressed when the discontent of the Percies at the ingratitude of a monarch whom they claimed to have raised to the crown broke out in rebellion, and Hotspur, the son of the Earl of Northumberland, leagued himself with the Scots
1403 and with the insurgents of Wales. His defeat and death in an obstinate battle near Shrewsbury for a time averted the danger; but three years later his father rose in a fresh insurrection, and though the seizure and execution of his fellow-conspirator Scrope, the Archbishop of York, drove Northumberland over the border, he remained till his death in a later inroad a peril to the throne. Encouraged meanwhile by the weakness of England, Wales, so long tranquil, shook off the yoke of her conquerors, and the whole country rose at the call of an adventurer, Owen Glendower, or of Glendowerdy, who proclaimed himself the descendant of its native princes. Owen left the invaders, as of old, to contend with famine and the mountain storms; but they had no sooner retired than he sallied out from his inaccessible fastnesses to win victories which were followed by the adhesion of all North Wales and great part of the South to his cause, while a force of French auxiliaries was despatched by Charles of France to his aid. It was only the restoration of peace in England which enabled Henry to roll back the tide of Glendower's success. By slow and deliberate campaigns continued through four years the Prince of Wales wrested from him the South; his subjects in the North, discouraged by successive defeats, gradually fell away from his standard; and the repulse of a bold descent upon Shropshire drove Owen at last to take refuge among the mountains of Snowdon, where he seems to have maintained the contest, single-handed, till his death. With the close of the Welsh rising the Lancastrian throne felt itself secure from

without, but the danger from the Lollards remained as great as ever within. The new statute and its terrible penalties were boldly defied. The death of the Earl of Salisbury in one of the revolts against Henry, though his gory head was welcomed into London by a procession of abbots and bishops who went out singing psalms of thanksgiving to meet it, only transferred the leadership of the party to one of the foremost warriors of the time. Sir John Oldcastle, whose marriage raised him to the title of Lord Cobham, threw open his castle of Cowling to the Lollards as their head-quarters, sheltered their preachers, and set the prohibitions and sentences of the bishops at defiance. Although Henry the Fourth died worn out with the troubles of his reign without venturing to cope with this formidable opponent, the stern temper of his successor at once faced the danger. A new royal mandate was issued against the preachers, and Oldcastle was besieged in his castle and conducted as a prisoner to the Tower. His escape was the signal for the revolt of his sect. A secret command summoned the Lollards to assemble in St. Giles's fields. We gather, if not the real aims of the rising, at least the terror that it caused, from Henry's statement that its purpose was "to destroy himself, his brothers, and several of the spiritual and temporal lords;" but the vigilance of the young King prevented the junction of the Lollards of London with their friends in the country by securing the city gates, and those who appeared at the place of meeting were dispersed by the royal forces. On the failure of the rising, the law was rendered more rigorous. Magistrates were directed to arrest all Lollards and hand them over to the bishops; a conviction of heresy was made to entail forfeiture of blood and of estate; and the execution of thirty-nine prominent Lollards was followed after some years by the arrest of Oldcastle himself. In spite of his rank and of an old friendship with the King, Lord Cobham was hung alive in chains and a fire slowly kindled beneath his feet.

1399 to 1422

January, 1414

1418

With the death of Sir John Oldcastle the political activity of Lollardism came suddenly to an end, while the steady persecution of the bishops, if it failed to extinguish it as a religious movement, succeeded in destroying the vigour and energy which it had shown at the outset of its career. But the House of Lancaster had, as yet, only partially accomplished the aims with which it mounted the throne. In the eyes of the nobles, Richard's chief crime had been his policy of peace, and the aid which they gave to the revolution sprang mainly from their hope of a renewal of the war. The energy of the war-party was seconded by the temper of the nation at large, already forgetful of the sufferings of the past struggle and longing only to wipe out its shame. The internal calamities of France offered at this moment a tempting opportunity for aggression. Its King, Charles the Sixth, was a maniac, while its princes and nobles were divided into two great parties, the one headed by the Duke of Burgundy and bearing his name, the other by the Duke of Orleans and bearing the title of Armagnacs. The struggle had

Agincourt

1399 to 1422

been jealously watched by Henry the Fourth, but his attempt to feed it by pushing an English force into France at once united the combatants. Their strife, however, recommenced more bitterly than ever when the claim of the French crown by Henry the Fifth on his accession declared his purpose of renewing the war. No claim could have been more utterly baseless, for the Parliamentary title by which the House of Lancaster held England could give it no right over France, and the strict law of hereditary succession which Edward asserted could be pleaded, if pleaded at all, only by the House of Mortimer. Not only the claim, indeed, but the very nature of the war itself was wholly different from that of Edward the Third. Edward had been forced into the struggle against his will by the ceaseless attacks of France, and his claim of the crown was a mere afterthought to secure the alliance of Flanders. The war of Henry, on the other hand, though in form a mere renewal of the earlier struggle on the expiration of the truce made by Richard, was in fact a wanton aggression on the part of a nation tempted by the helplessness of its opponent and still galled by the memory of former defeat. It was in vain that the French strove to avert the English attack by an offer to surrender the Duchy of Acquitaine; Henry's aims pointed to the acquisition of Normandy rather than of the South, and his first exploit was the capture of Harfleur. Dysentery made havoc in his ranks during the siege, and it was with a mere handful of men that he resolved to insult the enemy by a daring march, like that of Edward, upon Calais. The discord, however, on which he probably reckoned for security, vanished before the actual appearance of the invaders in the heart of France, and when his weary and half-starved force succeeded in crossing the Somme, it found sixty thousand Frenchmen encamped right across its line of march. Their position, flanked on either side by woods, but with a front so narrow that the dense masses were drawn up thirty men deep, was strong for purposes of defence but ill suited for attack; and the French leaders, warned by the experience of Cressy and Poitiers, resolved to await the

October 25, 1415

English advance. Henry, on the other hand, had no choice between attack and unconditional surrender. His troops were starving, and the way to Calais lay across the French army. But the King's courage rose with the peril. A knight—it was said—in his train wished that the thousands of stout warriors lying idle that night in England had been standing in his ranks. Henry answered with a burst of scorn. "I would not have a single man more," he replied. "If God give us the victory, it will be plain that we owe it to His grace. If not, the fewer we are, the less loss for England." Starving and sick as were the handful of men whom he led, they shared the spirit of their leader. As the chill rainy night passed away, his archers bared their arms and breasts to give fair play to "the crooked stick and the grey goose wing," but for which—as the rhyme ran—"England were but a fling," and with a great shout sprang forward to the attack. The sight of their advance roused

the fiery pride of the French; the wise resolve of their leaders was forgotten, and the dense mass of men-at-arms plunged heavily forward through miry ground on the English front. But at the first sign of movement Henry had halted his line, and fixing in the ground the sharp palisades with which each man was furnished, his archers poured their fatal arrow flights into the hostile ranks. The carnage was terrible, but the desperate charges of the French knighthood at last drove the English archers to the neighbouring woods, from which they were still able to pour their shot into the enemy's flanks, while Henry, with the men-at-arms around him, flung himself on the French line. In the terrible struggle which followed the King bore off the palm of bravery: he was felled once by a blow from a French mace, and the crown on his helmet was cleft by the sword of the Duke of Alençon; but the enemy was at last broken, and the defeat of the main body of the French was followed at once by the rout of their reserve. The triumph was more complete, as the odds were even greater, than at Cressy. Eleven thousand Frenchmen lay dead on the field, and more than a hundred princes and great lords were among the fallen. 1399 to 1422

The immediate result of the battle of Agincourt was small, for the English army was too exhausted for pursuit, and it made its way to Calais only to return to England. The war was limited to a contest for the command of the Channel, till the increasing bitterness of the strife between the Burgundians and Armagnacs encouraged Henry to resume his attempt to recover Normandy. Whatever may have been his aim in this enterprise—whether it were, as has been suggested, to provide a refuge for his House, should its power be broken in England, or simply to acquire a command of the seas—the patience and skill with which his object was accomplished raise him high in the rank of military leaders. Disembarking with an army of 40,000 men, near the mouth of the Touque, he stormed Caen, received the surrender of Bayeux, reduced Alençon and Falaise, and detaching his brother the Duke of Gloucester to occupy the Côtentin, made himself master of Avranches and Domfront. With Lower Normandy wholly in his hands, he advanced upon Evreux, captured Louviers, and, seizing Pont de l'Arche, threw his troops across the Seine. The end of these masterly movements was now revealed. Rouen was at this time the largest and wealthiest of the towns of France; its walls were defended by a powerful artillery; Alan Blanchard, a brave and resolute patriot, infused the fire of his own temper into the vast population; and the garrison, already strong, was backed by fifteen thousand citizens in arms. But the genius of Henry was more than equal to the difficulties with which he had to deal. He had secured himself from an attack on his rear by the reduction of Lower Normandy, his earlier occupation of Harfleur severed the town from the sea, and his conquest of Pont de l'Arche cut it off from relief on the side of Paris. Slowly but steadily the King drew his lines of investment round the doomed city; a flotilla was

The Conquest of Normandy

1417

1418

1389 to 1422

brought up from Harfleur, a bridge of boats thrown over the Seine above the town, the deep trenches of the besiegers protected by posts, and the desperate sallies of the garrison stubbornly beaten back. For six months Rouen held resolutely out, but famine told fast on the vast throng of country folk who had taken refuge within its walls. Twelve thousand of these were at last thrust out of the city gates, but the cold policy of the conqueror refused them passage, and they perished between the trenches and the walls. In the hour of their agony women gave birth to infants, but even the new-born babes which were drawn up in baskets to receive baptism were lowered again to die on their mother's breast. It was little better within the town itself. As winter drew on one-half of the population wasted away. "War," said the terrible King, "has three handmaidens ever waiting on her, Fire, Blood, and Famine, and I have chosen the meekest maid of the three." But his demand of unconditional surrender nerved the citizens to a resolve of despair; they determined to fire the city and fling themselves in a mass on the English lines; and Henry, fearful lest his prize should escape him at the last, was driven to offer terms. Those who rejected a foreign yoke were suffered to leave the city, but his vengeance reserved its victim in Alan Blanchard, and the brave patriot was at Henry's orders put to death in cold blood.

The Conquest of France

A few sieges completed the reduction of Normandy. The King's designs were still limited to the acquisition of that province; and pausing in his career of conquest, he strove to win its loyalty by a remission of taxation and a redress of grievances, and to seal its possession by a formal peace with the French Crown. The conferences, however, which were held for this purpose at Pontoise failed through the temporary reconciliation of the French factions, while the length and expense of the war began to rouse remonstrance and discontent at home. The King's difficulties were at their height when the assassination of the Duke of Burgundy at Montereau, in the very presence of the Dauphin with whom he had come to hold conference, rekindled the fires of civil strife. The whole Burgundian party, with the new Duke, Philip the Good, at its head, flung itself in a wild thirst for revenge into Henry's hands. The mad King, Charles the Sixth, with his Queen and daughters, were in Philip's hands, and in his resolve to exclude the Dauphin from the throne the Duke stooped to buy English aid by giving Catharine, the eldest of the French princesses, in marriage to Henry, by conferring on him the Regency during the life of Charles, and recognizing his succession to the crown at that

1420

sovereign's death. The treaty was solemnly ratified by Charles himself in a conference at Troyes, and Henry, who in his new capacity of Regent had undertaken to conquer in the name of his father-in-law the territory held by the Dauphin, reduced the towns of the Upper Seine and entered Paris in triumph side by side with the King. The States-General of the realm were solemnly convened to the capital; and strange as the provisions of the Treaty

of Troyes must have seemed, they were confirmed without a murmur, and Henry recognized as the future sovereign of France. A passing defeat of his brother Clarence in Anjou called him back to the war. His re-appearance in the field was marked by the capture of Dreux, and a repulse before Orleans was redeemed by his success in the long and obstinate siege of Meaux. At no time had the fortunes of Henry reached a higher pitch than at the moment when he felt the touch of death. But the rapidity of his disease baffled the skill of physicians, and with a strangely characteristic regret that he had not lived to achieve the conquest of Jerusalem, the great Conqueror passed away.

1393 to 1422

August, 1422

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW MONARCHY, 1422 — 1540

SECTION I.—JOAN OF ARC, 1422—1451

[*Authorities.*—The "Wars of the English in France" (Rolls Series), "Narratives of the Expulsion of the English from Normandy" (Rolls Series), and Monstrelet are the chief sources for the war; for Joan of Arc, the "Procès de Jeanne d'Arc" (Société de l'Histoire de France). The various Chronicles of London (edited Kingsford) and the Proceedings of the Privy Council are the chief sources for the internal history of the period. Ramsay, "Lancaster and York," is the main modern authority.]

Disenfranchisement of the Commons

THE glory of Agincourt and the genius of Henry the Fifth hardly veiled at the close of his reign the weakness and humiliation of the Crown, hampered as it was by foreign war, by a huge debt amounting to nearly four millions of our money and which increased each year as the expenses doubled the income, by the weakness of its own title and by the claims of the House of Mortimer. The long minority of Henry the Sixth, who was a boy of nine months old at his father's death, as well as the personal weakness which marked his after-rule, left the House of Lancaster at the mercy of the Parliament. But the Parliament was fast dying down into a mere representation of the baronage and the great landowners. The Commons indeed retained the right of granting and controlling subsidies, of joining in all statutory enactments, and of impeaching ministers. But the Lower House was ceasing to be a real representative of the "Commons" whose name it bore. The borough franchise was suffering from the general tendency to restriction and privilege which in the bulk of towns was soon to reduce it to a farce. Up to this time all freemen settling in a borough and paying their dues to it became by the mere settlement its burgesses; but during the reign of Henry the Sixth this largeness of borough life was roughly curtailed. The trade companies which vindicated civic freedom from the tyranny of the older merchant guilds themselves tended to become a narrow and exclusive oligarchy. Most of the boroughs had by this time acquired civic property, and it was with the aim of securing their own enjoyment of this against any share of it by "strangers" that the existing burgesses, for the most part, procured charters of incorporation from the Crown, which turned them into a close body and excluded from their number all who were not burgesses by birth or who failed henceforth to purchase their right of entrance by a long apprenticeship. In addition to this narrowing of the burgess-body, the internal government of the boroughs had almost universally passed, since the failure of the Communal movement in the thirteenth

century, from the free gathering of the citizens in borough-mote into the hands of Common Councils, either self-elected or elected by the wealthier burgesses; and it was to these councils, or to a yet more restricted number of "select men" belonging to them, that clauses in the new charters generally confined the right of choosing their representatives in Parliament. The restriction of the county franchise on the other hand was the direct work of the aristocracy. Economic changes were in fact fast widening the franchise in the counties when the great landowners jealously interfered to curtail it. The number of freeholders had increased with the subdivision of estates and the social changes which we have already examined, while the increase of independence was marked by the "riots and divisions between the gentlemen and other people," which the nobles attributed to the excessive number of the voters. Matters were in this state when by an early Act of the reign of Henry the Sixth the right of voting in shires was restricted to freeholders holding land worth forty shillings (a sum equal in our money to at least twenty pounds) a year, and representing a far higher proportional income at the present time. This "great disfranchising statute," as it has been justly termed, was aimed, in its own words, against voters "of no value, whereof every of them pretended to have a voice equivalent with the more worthy knights and esquires dwelling within the same counties." But in actual working the statute was interpreted in a far more destructive fashion than its words were intended to convey. Up to this time all suitors who found themselves at the Sheriff's Court had voted without question for the Knight of the Shire, but by the new statute the great bulk of the existing voters, that is to say the leaseholders and copyholders, found themselves implicitly deprived of their franchise. A later statute, which seems, however, to have had no practical effect, showed the aristocratic temper, as well as the social changes against which it struggled, in its requirement that every Knight of the Shire should be "a gentleman born." The restriction of the suffrage was soon followed by its corruption in the "management" of elections. The complaint of the Kentishmen in Cade's revolt alleges that "the people of the shire are not allowed to have their free election in the choosing of knights for the shire, but letters have been sent from divers estates to the great rulers of all the county, the which enforceth their tenants and other people by force to choose other persons than the common will is."

1422 to 1451

The death of Henry the Fifth revealed in its bare reality the secret of power. The whole of the royal authority vested without a struggle in a council composed of great lords and Churchmen representing the baronage, at whose head stood Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, a legitimated son of John of Gaunt by his mistress Catherine Swynford. In the presence of Lollardism, the Church had at this time ceased to be a great political power and sunk into a mere section of the landed aristocracy. Its one aim was to preserve its enormous wealth, which was threatened at once

England under the Nobles

1422 to 1451

by the hatred of the heretics and by the greed of the nobles. Lollardism still lived, in spite of the steady persecution, as a spirit of revolt; and nine years after the young King's accession we find the Duke of Gloucester traversing England with men-at-arms for the purpose of repressing its risings and hindering the circulation of its invectives against the clergy. The greed of the nobles had been diverted, whether, as later legend said, by the deliberate device of the great Churchmen or no, to the fair field of France. For the real source of the passion with which the baronage pressed for war was sheer lust of gold. Whatever pulse of patriotism may have stirred the blood of the English archer at Agincourt, the aim of the English noble was simply plunder, the pillage of farms, the sack of cities, the ransom of captives. So intense was the greed of gain that only a threat of death could keep the fighting men in their ranks, and the results of victory after victory were lost by the anxiety of the conquerors to deposit their plunder and captives safely at home before reaping the more military fruits of their success. The moment the firm hand of great leaders such as Henry or Bedford was removed, the war died down into mere massacre and brigandage. "If God had been a captain now-a-days," exclaimed a French general, "He would have turned marauder." Cruelty went hand-in-hand with greed, and we find an English privateer coolly proposing to drown the crews of a hundred merchant vessels which he has taken, unless the council to whom he writes should think it better to spare their lives. The nobles were as lawless and dissolute at home as they were greedy and cruel abroad. The Parliaments, which had now become mere sittings of their retainers and partizans, were like armed camps to which the great lords came with small armies at their backs. That of 1426 received its name of the "Club Parliament," from the fact that when arms were prohibited the retainers of the barons appeared with clubs on their shoulders. When clubs were forbidden, they hid stones and balls of lead in their clothes. The dissoluteness against which Lollardism had raised its great moral protest reigned now without a check. A gleam of intellectual light was breaking on the darkness of the time, but only to reveal its hideous combination of mental energy with moral worthlessness. The Duke of Gloucester, whose love of letters was shown in the noble library he collected, was the most selfish and profligate prince of his day. The Earl of Worcester, a patron of Caxton, and one of the earliest scholars of the Revival of Letters, earned his title of "butcher" by the cruelty which raised him to a pre-eminence of infamy among the bloodstained leaders of the Wars of the Roses. All spiritual life seemed to have been trodden out in the ruin of the Lollards. Never had English literature fallen so low. A few tedious moralists alone preserved the name of poetry. History died down into the barest and most worthless fragments and annals. Even the religious enthusiasm of the people seemed to have spent itself, or to have been crushed out by the bishops' courts. The one belief

of the time was in sorcery and magic. Eleanor Cobham, the wife of the Duke of Gloucester, was convicted of having practised magic against the King's life with the priests of her household, and condemned to do penance in the streets of London. The shrivelled arm of Richard the Third was attributed to witchcraft. The mist which wrapt the battle-field of Barnet was attributed to the incantations of Friar Bungay. The one pure figure which rises out of the greed, the lust, the selfishness, and unbelief of the time, the figure of Joan of Arc, was regarded by every Englishman as that of a sorceress. 1422 to 1451

Joan of Arc

Jeannette d'Arc was the child of a labourer of Domremy, a little village in the neighbourhood of Vaucouleurs on the borders of Lorraine and Champagne, in other words of France and of the Empire. Just without the little cottage where she was born began the great woods of the Vosges, where the children of Domremy drank in poetry and legend from fairy ring and haunted well, hung their flower garlands on the sacred trees, and sang songs to the "good people" who might not drink of the fountain because of their sins. Jeanne loved the forest; its birds and beasts came lovingly to her at her childish call. But at home men saw nothing in her but "a good girl, simple and pleasant in her ways," spinning and sewing by her mother's side while the other girls went to the fields, tender to the poor and sick, fond of church, and listening to the church-bell with a dreamy passion of delight which never left her. The quiet life was soon broken by the storm of war as it at last came home to Domremy. The death of Charles the Sixth, which followed hard on that of Henry, greatly weakened the moral force of the English cause; and the partizans of the Dauphin, who still held his ground south of the Loire, pushed their incursions over the river with fresh vigour as they received reinforcements of Lombards from the Milanese, and of four thousand Scots who landed at Rochelle under the Earl of Douglas. In genius for war, however, and in political capacity, the Duke of Bedford, who had taken the command in France on his brother's death, was hardly inferior to Henry himself. Drawing closer by a patient diplomacy his alliances with the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany, he completed the conquest of Northern France, secured his communication with Normandy by the capture of Meulan, made himself master of the line of the Yonne by a victory near Auxerre, and pushed forward into the country near Macon. It was to arrest his progress that the Constable of Buchan advanced boldly from the Loire to the very borders of Normandy and attacked the English army at Verneuil. But a repulse hardly less disastrous than that of Agincourt left a third of the French knighthood on the field; and the Regent was preparing to cross the Loire when he was hindered by the intrigues of his brother the Duke of Gloucester. The nomination of Gloucester to the Regency in England by the will of the late King had been set aside by the council, and sick of the powerless Protectorate with which they had invested 1424

1422 to 1451

him, the Duke sought a new opening for his restless ambition in a marriage with Jacqueline, the Countess in her own right of Holland and Hainault. The match at once roused the jealousy of the Duke of Burgundy, who regarded himself as the heir of her dominions, and the efforts of Bedford were paralyzed by the withdrawal of his allies as they marched northward to combat his brother. For three years the council strove in vain to put an end to the ruinous struggle, during which Bedford was forced to remain simply on the defensive, till the failure of Gloucester again restored to him the aid of Burgundy, and he was once more able to push forward to the conquest of the South. The delay, however, brought little help to France, and the Dauphin saw Orleans invested by ten thousand of the allies without power to march to its relief. The war had long since reached the borders of Lorraine, and the family of Jeanne had more than once been forced to fly to the woods before bands of marauders, and find their home burnt and sacked on their return. The whole North of France, indeed, from the Lorraine to the German border was being fast reduced to a desert. The husbandmen fled for refuge to the towns, till these in fear of famine shut their gates against them. Then in their despair they threw themselves into the woods and became brigands in their turn. So terrible was the devastation, that the two contending armies at one time failed even to find one another in the desolate Beauce. The towns were in hardly better case, for misery and disease killed a hundred thousand people in Paris alone. As the outcasts and wounded passed by Domremy the young peasant girl gave them her bed and nursed them in their sickness. Her whole nature summed itself up in one absorbing passion: she "had pity," to use the phrase for ever on her lip, "on the fair realm of France." As her passion grew she recalled old prophecies that a maid from the Lorraine border should save the land; she saw visions; St. Michael appeared to her in a flood of blinding light, and bade her go to the help of the King and restore to him his realm. "Messire," answered the girl, "I am but a poor maiden; I know not how to ride to the wars, or to lead men-at-arms." The archangel returned to give her courage, and to tell her of "the pity" that there was in heaven for the fair realm of France. The girl wept, and longed that the angels who appeared to her would carry her away, but her mission was clear. It was in vain that her father when he heard her purpose swore to drown her ere she should go to the field with men-at-arms. It was in vain that the priest, the wise people of the village, the captain of Vaucouleurs, doubted and refused to aid her. "I must go to the King," persisted the peasant girl, "even if I wear my limbs to the very knees." "I had far rather rest and spin by my mother's side," she pleaded with a touching pathos, "for this is no work of my choosing, but I must go and do it, for my Lord wills it." "And who," they asked, "is your Lord?" "He is God." Words such as these touched the rough captain at last: he took Jeanne by the hand and swore to

lead her to the King. At the Court itself she found hesitation and doubt. The theologians proved from their books that they ought not to believe her. "There is more in God's book than in yours," Jeanne answered simply. At last the Dauphin received her in the midst of a throng of nobles and soldiers. "Gentle Dauphin," said the girl, "my name is Jehan the Maid. The Heavenly King sends me to tell you that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims, and you shall be lieutenant of the Heavenly King who is the King of France." 1422 to 1451

The Deliverance of Orleans

Orleans had already been driven by famine to offers of surrender when Jeanne appeared in the French Court. Charles had done nothing for its aid but shut himself up at Chinon and weep helplessly. The long series of English victories had in fact so demoralized the French soldiery that a mere detachment of archers under Sir John Fastolfe had repulsed an army, in what was called the "Battle of the Herrings," and conducted the convoy of provisions to which it owed its name in triumph into the camp before Orleans. Only two or three thousand Englishmen remained there in the trenches after a new withdrawal of their Burgundian allies, but though the town swarmed with men-at-arms not a single sally had been ventured upon during the six months' siege. The success however of the handful of English besiegers depended wholly on the spell of terror which they had cast over France, and the appearance of Jeanne at once broke the spell. The girl was in her eighteenth year, tall, finely formed, with all the vigour and activity of her peasant rearing, able to stay from dawn to nightfall on horseback without meat or drink. As she mounted her charger, clad in white armour from head to foot, with the great white banner studded with fleur-de-lys waving over her head, she seemed "a thing wholly divine, whether to see or hear." The ten thousand men-at-arms who followed her from Chinon, rough plunderers whose only prayer was that of La Hire, "Sire Dieu, I pray you to do for La Hire what La Hire would do for you, were you captain-at-arms and he God," left off their oaths and foul living at her word and gathered round the altars on their march. Her shrewd peasant humour helped her to manage the wild soldiery, and her followers laughed over their camp-fires at the old warrior who had been so puzzled by her prohibition of oaths that she suffered him still to swear by his bâton. In the midst of her enthusiasm her good sense never left her. The people crowded round her as she rode along, praying her to work miracles, and bringing crosses and chaplets to be blest by her touch. "Touch them yourself," she said to an old Dame Margaret; "your touch will be just as good as mine." But her faith in her mission remained as firm as ever. "The Maid prays and requires you," she wrote to Bedford, "to work no more distraction in France, but to come in her company to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the Turk." "I bring you," she told Dunois when he sallied out of Orleans to meet her, "the best aid ever sent to any one, the aid of the King of Heaven." The besiegers looked

1422 to 1451

on overawed as she led her force unopposed through their lines into Orleans, and, riding round the walls, bade the people look fearlessly on the dreaded forts which surrounded them. Her enthusiasm drove the hesitating generals to engage the handful of besiegers, and the enormous disproportion of forces at once made itself felt. Fort after fort was taken, till only the Tournelle remained, and then the council of war resolved to adjourn the attack. "You have taken your counsel," replied Jeanne, "and I take mine." Placing herself at the head of the men-at-arms, she ordered the gates to be thrown open, and led them against the fort. Few as they were, the English fought desperately, and the Maid, who had fallen wounded while endeavouring to scale its walls, was borne into a vineyard, while Dunois sounded the retreat. "Wait a while!" the girl imperiously pleaded, "eat and drink! so soon as my standard touches the wall you shall enter the fort." It touched, and the assailants burst in. On the next day the siege was abandoned, and the force which had conducted it withdrew in good order to the North. In the midst of her triumph Jeanne still remained the pure, tender-hearted peasant girl of the Vosges. Her first visit as she entered Orleans was to the great church, and there, as she knelt at mass, she wept in such a passion of devotion that "all the people wept with her." Her tears burst forth afresh at her first sight of bloodshed and of the corpses strewn over the battle-field. She grew frightened at her first wound, and only threw off the touch of womanly fear when she heard the signal for retreat. Yet more womanly was the purity with which she passed through the brutal warriors of a mediæval camp. It was her care for her honour that had led her to clothe herself in a soldier's dress. She wept hot tears when told of the foul taunts of the English, and called passionately on God to witness her chastity. "Yield thee, yield thee, Glasdale," she cried to the English warrior whose insults had been foulest, as he fell wounded at her feet, "you called me harlot! I have great pity on your soul." But all thought of herself was lost in the thought of her mission. It was in vain that the French generals strove to remain on the Loire. Jeanne was resolute to complete her task, and while the English remained panic-stricken around Paris the army followed her from Gien through Troyes, growing in number as it advanced, till it reached the gates of Rheims. With the coronation of the Dauphin the Maid felt her errand to be over. "O gentle King, the pleasure of God is done," she cried, as she flung herself at the feet of Charles the Seventh and asked leave to go home. "Would it were His pleasure," she pleaded with the Archbishop as he forced her to remain, "that I might go and keep sheep once more with my sisters and my brothers: they would be so glad to see me again!"

Death of the Maid

The policy of the French Court detained her while the cities of the North of France opened their gates to the newly-consecrated King. Bedford, however, who had been left without money or men, had now received reinforcements, and Charles, after a repulse

before the walls of Paris, fell back behind the Loire; while the towns on the Oise submitted again to the Duke of Burgundy. In this later struggle Jeanne fought with her usual bravery, but with the fatal consciousness that her mission was at an end, and during the defence of Compiègne she fell into the hands of the Bastard of Vendome, to be sold by her captor into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy and by the Duke into the hands of the English. To the English her triumphs were victories of sorcery, and after a year's imprisonment she was brought to trial on a charge of heresy before an ecclesiastical court with the Bishop of Beauvais at its head. Throughout the long process which followed every art was employed to entangle her in her talk. But the simple shrewdness of the peasant girl foiled the efforts of her judges. "Do you believe," they asked, "that you are in a state of peace?" "If I am not," she replied, "God will put me in it. If I am, God will keep me in it." Her capture, they argued, showed that God had forsaken her. "Since it has pleased God that I should be taken," she answered meekly, "it is for the best." "Will you submit," they demanded at last, "to the judgment of the Church Militant?" "I have come to the King of France," Jeanne replied, "by commission from God and from the Church Triumphant above: to that Church I submit." "I had far rather die," she ended, passionately, "than renounce what I have done by my Lord's command." They deprived her of mass. "Our Lord can make me hear it without your aid," she said, weeping. "Do your voices," asked the judges, "forbid you to submit to the Church and the Pope?" "Ah, no! Our Lord first served." Sick, and deprived of all religious aid, it was no wonder that as the long trial dragged on and question followed question Jeanne's firmness wavered. On the charge of sorcery and diabolical possession she still appealed firmly to God. "I hold to my Judge," she said, as her earthly judges gave sentence against her, "to the King of Heaven and Earth. God has always been my Lord in all that I have done. The devil has never had power over me." It was only with a view to be delivered from the English prison and transferred to the prisons of the Church that she consented to a formal abjuration of heresy. She feared in fact among the English soldiery those outrages to her honour, to guard against which she had from the first assumed the dress of a man. In the eyes of the Church her dress was a crime and she abandoned it; but a renewed insult forced her to resume the one safeguard left her, and the return to it was treated as a relapse into heresy which doomed her to death. A great pile was raised in the market-place of Rouen where her statue stands now. Even the brutal soldiers who snatched the hated "witch" from the hands of the clergy and hurried her to her doom were hushed as she reached the stake. One indeed passed to her a rough cross he had made from a stick he held, and she clasped it to her bosom. "Oh! Rouen, Rouen," she was heard to murmur, as her eyes ranged over the city from the lofty scaffold, "I have great fear lest you suffer for

1422 to 1451

1430

1422 to 1451 my death." "Yes! my voices were of God!" she suddenly cried as the last moment came; "they have never deceived me!" Soon the flames reached her, the girl's head sunk on her breast, there was one cry of "Jesus!"—"We are lost," an English soldier

1431 muttered as the crowd broke up, "we have burned a Saint."

The Loss of France

The English cause was indeed irretrievably lost. In spite of a pompous coronation of their boy-king at Paris, Bedford, with the cool wisdom of his temper, seems to have abandoned all hope of permanently retaining France, and to have fallen back on his brother's original plan of securing Normandy. Henry's Court was established for a year at Rouen, a university founded at Caen, and whatever rapine and disorder might be permitted elsewhere, justice, good government, and security for trade were steadily maintained through the favoured province. At home Bedford was resolutely backed by the Bishop of Winchester, who had been raised to the rank of Cardinal, and who still governed England through the Royal Council in spite of the fruitless struggles of the Duke of Gloucester. His immense wealth was poured without stint into the exhausted Treasury; his loans to the Crown amounted to half-a-million; and the army which he had raised at his own cost for the Hussite Crusade in Bohemia was unscrupulously diverted to the relief of Bedford after the delivery of Orleans. The Cardinal's diplomatic ability was seen in the truces he wrung from Scotland, and in his personal efforts to prevent the reconcilia-

1435 tion of Burgundy with France. But the death of Bedford was a death-blow to the English cause. Burgundy allied itself with Charles the Seventh; Paris, after a sudden revolt, surrendered to the King; and the English dominions were at once reduced to Normandy and the fortresses of Picardy, Maine, and Anjou. To preserve these the English soldiers, shrunk as they were to a mere handful, struggled with a bravery as desperate as in their days of triumph. Lord Talbot, the most daring of their chiefs, forded the Somme with the waters up to his chin to relieve Crotoy, and threw his men across the Oise in the face of a French army to relieve Pontoise. But in spite of these efforts and of the pressure of the war-party at home, the great Churchmen, who, though weakened by Beaufort's retirement, still remained at the head of affairs, saw that success was no longer possible. They offered in vain to fall back on the terms of the Treaty of Bretigny; and after the expiration of a short truce, which they purchased by the release of the Duke of Orleans, a fresh effort for peace was made by the Earl of Suffolk, who had now become the minister of Henry the Sixth and

1445 negotiated for his master a marriage with Marguerite of Anjou. Her father, Réné, the titular King of Sicily and Jerusalem, was also nominally Duke of the provinces of Maine and Anjou, and these were surrendered by the English minister as the price of a match which Suffolk regarded as the prelude to a final peace. A terrible crime secured the peace party from the opposition of the Duke of Gloucester, who had resumed his old activity on the

retirement of Cardinal Beaufort and had now placed himself at the head of the partizans of the war; he was summoned to attend a Parliament at St. Edmondsbury, charged with high treason, and a few days after found dead in his bed. But the difficulties he had raised foiled Suffolk in his negotiations; and though Charles extorted the surrender of Le Mans by a threat of war, the provisions of the treaty remained for the most part unfulfilled. The struggle, however, now became a hopeless one. In two months from the resumption of the war half Normandy was in the hands of Dunois; Rouen rose against her feeble garrison and threw open her gates to the King; and the defeat of three thousand Englishmen in a fight at Fourmigny was the signal for revolt throughout the rest of the province. The surrender of Cherbourg left Henry not a foot of ground in Normandy, but the views of the French monarch reached south of the Loire, where Guienne was still loyal to the English Crown. But not a man arrived for its defence; and the surrender of fortress after fortress secured the final expulsion of the English from the soil of France. The Hundred Years' War had ended, not only in the loss of the temporary conquests made since the time of Edward the Third, with the exception of Calais, but in the loss of the great southern province which had remained in English hands ever since the marriage of its Duchess, Eleanor, to Henry the Second, and in the building up of France into a far greater power than it had ever been before.

1435 to 1451

1447

1451

Section II.—The Wars of the Roses, 1450—1471

[*Authorities.*—The original authorities are scanty in the extreme. The London Chronicles and the Continuator of the Croyland Chronicles are the chief sources for general history. Social life is well illustrated in the "Paston Letters" (edited Gairdner), but they are of little value for public events. Fortescue, "Governance of England" (edited Plummer), and the "De Laudibus Legum Angliæ," of the same author, are important for the political theory of the period; the "Libelle of Englishe Policie" (Hakluyt Society) gives the first scheme of naval policy ever put forward in England and supplies valuable economic information. The "Chronicle of the Lincolnshire Rebellion" (Camden Miscellany) and the "Arrival of Edward IV." (Camden Society) are semi-official Yorkist accounts of portions of the period.]

Cade's Revolt

The ruinous issue of the great struggle with France roused England to a burst of fury against the wretched government to whose weakness and credulity it attributed its disasters. Suffolk was impeached and murdered as he fled across sea. The Bishop of Chichester, who had negotiated the cession of Anjou, was seized by the populace and torn to pieces. In Kent, the great manufacturing district of the day, seething with a busy population, and especially concerned with the French contest through the piracy of the Cinque Ports where every house showed some spoil from the wars, the discontent broke into open revolt. Yeomen and trades-

1450 to 1471 — 1450

men formed the bulk of the insurgents, but they were joined by more than a hundred esquires and gentlemen, and two great landowners of Sussex, the Abbot of Battle and the Prior of Lewes, openly favoured their cause. John Cade, a soldier of some experience in the French wars, was placed at their head, and the army, now twenty thousand men strong, marched in Whitsun-week on Blackheath. The "Complaint of the Commons of Kent," which they laid before the Royal Council, is of enormous value in the light which it throws on the condition of the people. So utterly had Lollardism been extinguished that not one of the demands touches on religious reform. The old social discontent seems to have subsided. The question of villainage and serfage, which had roused Kent to its desperate rising in 1381, finds no place in its "Complaint" of 1450. In the seventy years which had intervened, villainage had died naturally away before the progress of social change. The Statutes of Apparel, which begin at this time to encumber the Statute-Book, show in their anxiety to curtail the dress of the labourer and the farmer the progress of these classes in comfort and wealth; and from the language of the statutes themselves, it is plain that as wages rose both farmer and labourer went on clothing themselves better in spite of sumptuary provisions. With the exception of a demand for the repeal of the Statute of Labourers, the programme of the Commons was now not social, but political. The "Complaint" calls for administrative and economical reforms, for a change of ministry, a more careful expenditure of the Royal revenue, and, as we have seen, for the restoration of freedom of election, which had been broken in upon by the interference both of the Crown and the great landowners. The refusal of the Council to receive the "Complaint" was followed by a victory of the Kentishmen over the Royal forces at Sevenoaks; and the occupation of London, coupled with the execution of Lord Say, the most unpopular of the Royal ministers, broke the obstinacy of his colleagues. The "Complaint" was received, and pardons granted to all who had joined in the rising; but the insurgents were hardly dispersed to their homes, when Cade, who had striven in vain to retain them in arms, was pursued and slain as he fled into Sussex. No bloody retaliation followed on the death of the chief of the revolt, but the "Complaint" was quietly laid aside, and the Duke of Somerset, who was especially regarded as responsible for the late misgovernment, resumed his place at the head of the Royal Council.

York and the Beauforts

Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, as the descendant of John of Gaunt and his mistress Catherine Swynford, was the representative of a junior branch of the House of Lancaster, whose claims to the throne Henry IV. had barred by a clause in the Act which legitimated their line, but whose hopes of the Crown were now roused by the childlessness of Henry the Sixth. It was probably a suspicion of their designs which stirred the Duke of York to action. In addition to other claims which he as yet refrained from urging, he claimed as

the descendant of Edmund of Langley, the fifth among the sons of Edward the Third, to be regarded as heir presumptive to the throne. His claim seems to have been a popular one, and on the interruption of the struggle between the two rivals by the severe malady of the King who sank for a year into absolute incapacity, the vote of Parliament appointed York Protector of the Realm. On Henry's recovery, however, the Duke of Somerset, who had been impeached and committed to the Tower by his rival, was restored to power, and supported with singular vigour and audacity by the Queen. York at once took up arms, and backed by some of the most powerful nobles, advanced with 3000 men upon St. Albans where Henry was encamped. A successful assault upon the town was crowned by the fall of Somerset, and a return of the King's malady brought the renewal of York's Protectorate. Henry's recovery, however, again restored the supremacy of the House of Beaufort, and after a temporary reconciliation between the two parties York again raised his standard at Ludlow, where he was joined by the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, the heads of the great house of Neville. After a slight success of Lord Salisbury at Bloreheath, the King marched rapidly on the insurgents, and a decisive battle was only averted by the desertion of a part of the Yorkist army and the disbandment of the rest. The Duke himself fled to Ireland, the Earls to Calais, while the Queen, summoning a Parliament at Coventry, pressed on their attainder. But the check, whatever its cause, had been merely a temporary one. In the following Midsummer the Earls again landed in Kent, and backed by a general rising of the county, entered London amidst the acclamations of its citizens. The Royal army was defeated in a hard-fought action at Northampton, Margaret fled to Scotland, and Henry was left a prisoner in the hands of the Duke of York.

1450 to 1471

1460

The position of York as heir presumptive to the crown had ceased with the birth of a son to Henry the Sixth; but the victory of Northampton no sooner raised him to the supreme control of affairs than he ventured to assert the far more dangerous claims which he had secretly cherished, and to its consciousness of which was owing the bitter hostility of the Royal House. As the descendant of Edmund of Langley he stood only next in succession to the House of Lancaster, but as the descendant of Lionel, the elder brother of John of Gaunt, he stood in strict hereditary right before it. We have already seen how the claims of Lionel had passed to the House of Mortimer: it was through Anne, the heiress of the Mortimers, who had wedded his father, that they passed to the Duke. There was, however, no constitutional ground for any limitation of the right of Parliament to set aside an elder branch in favour of a younger, and in the Parliamentary Act which placed the House of Lancaster on the throne the claim of the House of Mortimer had been deliberately set aside. Possession, too, told against the Yorkist pretensions. To modern minds the best reply

The Wars of the Roses

1450 to 1471

to their claim lay in the words used at a later time by Henry himself. "My father was King; his father also was King; I myself have worn the crown forty years from my cradle; you have all sworn fealty to me as your sovereign, and your fathers have done the like to mine. How then can my right be disputed?" Long and undisturbed possession, as well as a distinctly legal title by free vote of Parliament, was in favour of the House of Lancaster. But the persecution of the Lollards, the disfranchisement of the voter, the interference with elections, the odium of the war, the shame of the long misgovernment told fatally against the weak and imbecile King, whose reign had been a long battle of contending factions. That the misrule had been serious was shown by the attitude of the commercial class. It was the rising of Kent, the great manufacturing district of the realm, which brought about the victory of Northampton. Throughout the struggle which followed London and the great merchant towns were steady for the House of York. Zeal for the Lancastrian cause was found only in the wild Welsh border-lands or in the yet wilder districts of the North and the West. It is absurd to suppose that the shrewd traders of Cheapside were moved by an abstract question of hereditary right, or that the rough borderers of the Marches believed themselves to be supporting the right of Parliament to regulate the succession. But it marks the power which Parliament had now gained that the Duke of York felt himself compelled to convene the two Houses, and to lay his claim before the Lords as a petition of right. Neither oaths nor the numerous Acts which had settled and confirmed the right to the crown in the House of Lancaster could destroy, he pleaded, his hereditary claim. The baronage received the petition with hardly concealed reluctance, and solved the question, as they hoped, by a compromise. They refused to dethrone the King, but they had sworn no fealty to his child, and at Henry's death they agreed to receive the Duke as successor to the crown. But the open display of York's pretensions at once united the partizans of the Royal House, and the deadly struggle which received the name of the Wars of the Roses, from the white rose which formed the badge of the House of York and the red rose which was the cognizance of the House of Lancaster, began in the gathering of the North round Lord Clifford and of the West round the new Duke of Somerset. York, who had hurried to meet the first with a far inferior force, was defeated and captured at Wake-

1460

field, and the passion of civil war broke fiercely out on the field. The Duke was hurried to the block, and his head, crowned in mockery with a diadem of paper, is said to have been impaled on the walls of York. His boy, Lord Rutland, fell crying for mercy on his knees before Clifford. But Clifford's father had been the first to fall in the battle of St. Albans which opened the struggle. "As your father killed mine," cried the savage Baron while he plunged his dagger in the boy's breast, "I will kill you!" A force of Kentishmen under the Earl of Warwick barred the march of

the conquerors on London, but after a desperate struggle at St. Albans the Yorkist forces broke under cover of night. An immediate march on the capital would have decided the contest, but the conquerors paused to sully their victory by a series of bloody executions, and the rough northerners, whom Margaret had brought up, scattered to pillage, while Edward, Earl of March, the son of the late Duke of York, who had cut his way through a body of Lancastrians at Mortimer's Cross, struck boldly upon London. The citizens rallied at his call and cries of "Long live King Edward" rang round the handsome young leader as he rode through the streets. A council of Yorkist lords, hastily summoned, resolved that the compromise agreed on in Parliament was at an end and that Henry of Lancaster had forfeited the throne. The final issue, however, now lay, not with Parliament, but with the sword. Disappointed of London, the Lancastrian army fell rapidly back on the North, and Edward hurried as rapidly in pursuit. 1455 to 1471 1461

The two armies encountered one another at Towton Field, near Tadcaster. In the numbers engaged, as well as in the terrible obstinacy of the struggle, no such battle had been seen in England since the fight of Senlac. On either side the armies numbered nearly 60,000 men. The day had just broken when the Yorkists advanced through a thick snow-fall, and for six hours the battle raged with desperate bravery on either side. At one critical moment Warwick saw his men falter, and stabbing his horse before them, swore on the cross of his sword to win or die on the field. At last the Lancastrians slowly gave way, a river in their rear turned the retreat into a rout, and the flight and carnage, for no quarter was given on either side, went on through the night and the morrow. Of the conquered, Edward's herald counted more than 20,000 corpses on the field, and the losses of the conquerors were hardly less heavy. Six barons had fallen in the fight, the Earls of Devon and Wiltshire were taken and beheaded at its close; an enormous bill of attainder wrapt in the same ruin and confiscation all the nobles who still adhered to the House of Lancaster, and the execution of Lords Oxford and Aubrey gave a terrible significance to its clauses. The struggles of Margaret only served to bring fresh calamities on her adherents. A new rising in the North was crushed by the Earl of Warwick, and a legend which lights up the gloom of the time with a gleam of poetry told how the fugitive Queen, after escaping with difficulty from a troop of bandits, found a new brigand in the depths of the wood. With the daring of despair she confided to him her child. "I trust to your loyalty," she said, "the son of your King." Margaret and her child escaped over the border under the robber's guidance, but a new rising in the following year brought about the execution of Somerset and flung Henry into the hands of his enemies. His feet were tied to the stirrups, he was led thrice round the pillory, and then conducted as a prisoner to the Tower. 1463

Ruined as feudalism really was by the terrible bloodshed and

1450 to 1471 — The King-Maker

confiscations of the civil war, it had never seemed so powerful as in the years which followed Towton. Out of the wreck of the baronage a family which had always stood high amongst its fellows towered into unrivalled greatness. Lord Warwick was by descent Earl of Salisbury, a son of the great noble whose support had been mainly instrumental in raising the House of York to the throne. He had doubled his wealth and influence by his acquisition of the Earldom of Warwick, through a marriage with the heiress of the Beauchamps. His services at Towton had been munificently rewarded by the grant of vast estates from the Lancastrian confiscations and by his elevation to the highest posts in the service of the State. He was governor of Calais, Lieutenant of Ireland, and Warden of the Western Marches. This personal power was backed by the power of the House of Neville, of which he was the head. Lords Falconberg, Abergavenny, and Latimer were his uncles. His brother, Lord Montagu, had received as his share in the spoil the Earldom of Northumberland, the estates of the Percies, and the command of the Northern border. His younger brother, George, had been raised to the See of York and the office of Lord Chancellor. At first sight the figure of Warwick strikes us as the very type of the feudal baron. He could raise armies at his call from his own earldoms. Six hundred liveried retainers followed him to Parliament. His fame as a military leader had been established by the great victories which crushed the House of Lancaster, as well as by the crowning glory of Towton. Yet few men were ever further, in fact, from the feudal ideal. Active, skilful, ruthless warrior as he was, Warwick—if we believe his contemporaries—had little personal daring. In war he was rather general than soldier. His genius in fact was not so much military as diplomatic; what he excelled in was intrigue, treachery, the contrivance of plots, and sudden desertions. And in the boy-king whom he had raised to the throne he met not merely a consummate general, but a politician whose subtlety and rapidity of conception was destined to leave a deep and enduring mark on the character of the monarchy itself. Edward was but nineteen at his accession, and both his kinship (for he was the King's cousin by blood) and his recent services rendered Warwick during the first three years of his reign all-powerful in the State. But the final ruin of Henry's cause in the battle of Hexham gave the signal for a silent struggle between Edward and his minister. The King's first step was to avow his marriage with the widow of a slain Lancastrian, Dame Elizabeth Grey, and to raise her family to greatness as a counterpoise to the Nevilles. Her father, Lord Rivers, became Constable; her son by the first marriage was wedded to the heiress of the Duke of Exeter, whom Warwick had demanded for his nephew. Warwick's policy lay in a close connection with France; he had been already foiled in negotiating a French marriage for the King, and on his crossing the seas to conclude a marriage of the King's sister, Margaret, with one of the

French princes, Edward availed himself of his absence to deprive his brother of the seals, and to wed his sister to the sworn enemy both of France and of Warwick, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. For the moment it seemed as if the King's ruin was at hand. In spite of the Royal opposition, Warwick replied to Edward's challenge by the marriage of his daughter with the King's brother, the Duke of Clarence, and a revolt which instantly broke out threw Edward into the hands of his great subject. The terms exacted as the price of the King's release transferred to the Nevilles the succession to the crown, for Edward was still without a son, and Warwick wrested from him the betrothal of his infant daughter to the son of Lord Montagu, the heir of his house. The Earl's ambition, however, was still unsatisfied, and he was advancing to support a new rising which had broken out at his instigation in Lincolnshire, when the rapid march of Edward was followed by a decisive victory over the insurgents. It is hopeless, with the scanty historical materials we possess of this period, to attempt to explain its sudden revolutions of fortune, or the panic which induced Warwick at this trivial check to fly for refuge to France, where the Burgundian connection of Edward secured his enemies the support of Louis the Eleventh. But the unscrupulous temper of the Earl was seen in the alliance which he at once concluded with the partizans of the House of Lancaster. On the promise of Queen Margaret to wed her son to his daughter Anne, Warwick engaged to restore the crown to the royal captive whom he had flung into the Tower; and choosing a moment when Edward was busy with a revolt in the North and when a storm had dispersed the Burgundian fleet which defended the Channel, he threw himself boldly on the English shore. Kent rose in his support as he disembarked, and the desertion of Lord Montagu, whom Edward still trusted, drove the King in turn to seek shelter over sea. While Edward fled with a handful of adherents to the Court of Burgundy, Henry of Lancaster was again conducted from his prison to the throne, but the bitter hate of the party Warwick had so ruthlessly crushed found no gratitude for the "King-Maker." His own conduct, as well as that of his party, when Edward again disembarked in the spring at Ravenspur, showed a weariness of the new alliance, quickened perhaps by their dread of Margaret, whose return to England was hourly expected. Passing through the Lancastrian districts of the North with a declaration that he waived all right to the crown and sought only his own hereditary duchy, Edward was left unassailed by an overwhelming force which Montagu had collected, was joined on his march by his brother Clarence who had throughout acted in concert with Warwick, and was admitted into London by Warwick's brother, the Archbishop of York. Encamped at Coventry, the Earl himself opened negotiations with Edward for a new desertion, but the King was now strong enough to fling off the mask, and Warwick, desperate of a reconciliation, marched suddenly on London. The battle of Barnet,

1450 to 1471

1471 to 1509 — 1471

a medley of carnage and treachery which lasted six hours, ended with the fall of Warwick as he fled for hiding to the woods. Margaret had landed too late to bring aid to her great partizan, but the military triumph of Edward was completed by the skilful strategy with which he forced her army to battle at Tewkesbury, and by its complete overthrow. The Queen herself became a captive; her boy fell on the field, stabbed—as was affirmed—by the Yorkist lords after Edward had met his cry for mercy by a buffet from his gauntlet; and the death of Henry in the Tower crushed the last hopes of the House of Lancaster.

The Beauforts were declared legitimate by an act of Richard II.; Henry IV. later added a clause to bar their rights of succession to the throne, but this clause was legally invalid (see Gairdner, "Richard III."). The numbers engaged at Towton have been very much exaggerated; Oman estimates from 15,000 to 20,000 as having been present.

Section III.—The New Monarchy, 1471—1509

[*Authorities.*—In addition to the authorities already mentioned, may be mentioned More, "History of Richard III.," and Polydore Vergil, "Anglicæ Historiæ." For Henry VII., see "Memorials of Henry VII." (Rolls Series), the "Letters and Papers of Richard III. and Henry VII." (Rolls Series), the Rolls of Parliament and Rymer's "Fœdera." Bacon's "Henry VII.," though not an original authority, is a work of extreme interest. Gairdner, "Richard III.," and Busch, "England under the Tudors," are of great value. For Caxton, see Blades, "Biography and Typography of Caxton."]

The New Monarchy

There are few periods in our annals from which we turn with such weariness and disgust as from the Wars of the Roses. Its thick crowd of savage battles, its ruthless executions, its shameless treasons seem all the more terrible from the pure selfishness of the ends for which men fought, the utter want of all nobleness and chivalry in the struggle itself, of all great result in its close. But even while the contest was raging the cool eye of a philosophic statesman could find in it matter for other feelings than those of mere disgust. England presented to Philippe de Commines the rare spectacle of a land where, brutal as was the civil strife, "there are no buildings destroyed or demolished by war, and where the mischief of it falls on those who make the war." The ruin and bloodshed were limited, in fact, to the great lords and their feudal retainers. Once or twice indeed, as at Towton, the towns threw themselves into the struggle on the Yorkist side, but for the most part the trading and industrial classes stood wholly apart from, and unaffected by it. Commerce went on unchecked, and indeed developed itself through the closer friendship with Flanders and the House of Burgundy more rapidly than at any former period. The general tranquillity of the country at large, while feudalism was dashing itself to pieces in battle after battle, was shown by the remarkable fact that justice remained wholly undisturbed.

1471 to 1509

The law courts sate quietly at Westminster, the judges rode as of old in circuit, the system of jury-trial (though the jurors were still expected to use their local and personal knowledge of the case) took more and more its modern form by the separation of the jurors from the witnesses. But if the common view of England during these Wars as a mere chaos of treason and bloodshed is a false one, still more false is the common view of the pettiness of their result. The Wars of the Roses did far more than ruin one Royal House or set up another on the throne. If they did not utterly destroy English freedom, they arrested its progress for more than a hundred years. They found England, in the words of Commines, "among all the world's lordships of which I have knowledge, that where the public weal is best ordered, and where least violence reigns over the people." A King of England—the shrewd observer noticed—"can undertake no enterprise of account without assembling his Parliament, which is a thing most wise and holy, and therefore are these Kings stronger and better served" than the despotic sovereigns of the Continent. England, as one of its judges, Sir John Fortescue, could boast when writing at this time, was not an absolute but a limited monarchy; not a land where the will of the prince was itself the law, but where the prince could neither make laws nor impose taxes save by his subjects' consent. At no time had Parliament played so constant and prominent a part in the government of the realm. At no time had the principles of constitutional liberty seemed so thoroughly understood and so dear to the people at large. The long Parliamentary contest between the Crown and the two Houses since the days of Edward the First had firmly established the great securities of national liberty—the right of freedom from arbitrary taxation, from arbitrary legislation, from arbitrary imprisonment, and the responsibility of even the highest servants of the Crown to Parliament and to the law. But with the close of the war of the Succession freedom suddenly disappears. We enter on an epoch of constitutional retrogression in which the slow work of the age that went before it is rapidly undone. Parliamentary life is almost suspended, or is turned into a form by the overpowering influence of the Crown. The legislative powers of the two Houses are usurped by the Royal Council. Arbitrary taxation re-appears in benevolences and forced loans. Personal liberty is almost extinguished by a formidable spy-system and by the constant practice of arbitrary imprisonment. Justice is degraded by the prodigal use of bills of attainder, by the wide extension of the judicial power of the Royal Council, by the servility of judges, by the coercion of juries. If we seek a reason for so sudden and complete a revolution, we find it in the disappearance of feudalism, in other words of that organization of society in which our constitutional liberty had till now found its security. Freedom had been won by the sword of the Baronage. Its tradition had been watched over by the jealousy of the Church. The new class of the Commons which had grown from the union of

1471 to 1509

the country squire and the town trader was widening its sphere of political activity as it grew. But with the battle of Towton feudalism vanished away. The baronage lay a mere wreck after the storm of the civil war. The Church lingered helpless and perplexed, till it was struck down by Thomas Cromwell. The traders and the smaller proprietors sank into political inactivity. On the other hand, the Crown, which only fifty years before had been the sport of every faction, towered into solitary greatness. The old English Kingship, limited by the forces of feudalism or by the progress of constitutional freedom, faded suddenly away, and in its place we see, all-absorbing and unrestrained, the despotism of the New Monarchy.

Causes of the New Monarchy

If we use the name of the New Monarchy to express the character of the English sovereignty from the time of Edward the Fourth to the time of Elizabeth, it is because the character of the Monarchy during this period was something wholly new in our history. There is no kind of similarity between the Kingship of the Old-English, of the Norman, the Angevin, or the Plantagenet sovereigns, and the Kingship of the Tudors. The difference between them was the result, not of any gradual development, but of a simple revolution; and it was only by a revolution that the despotism of the New Monarchy was again done away. When the lawyers of the Long Parliament fell back for their precedents of constitutional liberty to the reign of the House of Lancaster, and silently regarded the whole period which we are about to traverse as a blank, they expressed not merely a legal truth but an historical one. What the Great Rebellion in its final result actually did was to wipe away every trace of the New Monarchy, and to take up again the thread of our political development just where it had been snapt by the Wars of the Roses. But revolutionary as the change was, we have already seen in their gradual growth the causes which brought about the revolution. The social organization from which our political constitution had hitherto sprung and on which it still rested had been silently sapped by the progress of industry, by the growth of spiritual and intellectual enlightenment, and by changes in the art of war. Its ruin was precipitated by religious persecution, by the disfranchisement of the Commons, and by the ruin of the Baronage in the civil strife. Of the great Houses some were extinct, others lingered only in obscure branches which were mere shadows of their former greatness. With the exception of the Poles, the Stanleys, and the Howards, themselves families of recent origin, hardly a fragment of the older baronage interfered from this time in the work of government. Neither the Church nor the smaller proprietors of the country, who with the merchant classes formed the Commons, were ready to take the place of the ruined nobles. Imposing as the great ecclesiastical body still seemed from the memories of its past, its immense wealth, its tradition of statesmanship, it was rendered powerless by a want of spiritual life, by a moral inertness, by its antagonism

to the deeper religious convictions of the people, and its blind hostility to the intellectual movement which was beginning to stir the world. Conscious of the want of popular favour and jealous only for the preservation of their vast estates, the Churchmen, who had clung for protection to the Baronage, clung on its fall for Protection to the Crown. Prelates like Morton and Warham devoted themselves to the Royal Council-board with the simple view of averting by means of the Monarchy the pillage of the Church. But in any wider political sense the influence of the body to which they belonged was insignificant. From the time of the Lollard outbreak the attitude of the Church is timid as that of a hunted thing. It is less obvious at first sight why the Commons should share the political ruin of the Church and the Lords, for the smaller county proprietors were growing enormously, both in wealth and numbers, at this moment through the fall of the great Houses and the dispersion of their vast estates, while the burgess class, as we have seen, was deriving fresh riches from the development of trade. But the result of the narrowing of the franchise and of the tampering with elections was now felt in the political insignificance of the Lower House. Reduced by these measures to a virtual dependence on the Baronage, it fell with the fall of the class to which it looked for guidance and support. And while its rival forces disappeared, the Monarchy stood ready to take their place. Not only indeed were the Churchman, the squire, and the burgess powerless to vindicate liberty against the Crown, but the very interests of self-preservation led them at this moment to lay freedom at its feet. The Church still trembled at the progress of heresy. The close corporations of the towns needed protection for their privileges. The landowners shared with the trader a profound horror of the war and disorder which they had witnessed, and an almost reckless desire to entrust the Crown with any power which would prevent its return. But above all, the landed and monied classes clung passionately to the Monarchy, as the one great force left which could save them from social revolt. The rising of the Commons of Kent shows that the troubles against which the Statutes of Labourers had been directed still remained as a formidable source of discontent. The great change in the character of agriculture indeed, which we have before described, the throwing together of the smaller holdings, the diminution of tillage, the increase of pasture lands, had tended largely to swell the numbers and turbulence of the floating labour class. The riots against "enclosures," of which we first hear in the time of Henry the Sixth, and which became a constant feature of the Tudor period, are indications not only of a constant strife going on in every quarter between the landowner and the smaller peasant class, but of a mass of social discontent which was constantly seeking an outlet in violence and revolution. And at this moment the break up of the military households of the nobles by the attainders and confiscations of the Wars of the Roses, as well as by the Statute

1471 to 1509

1471 to 1509

of Liveries which followed them, added a new element of violence and disorder to the seething mass. It is this social danger which lies at the root of the Tudor despotism. For the proprietary classes the repression of the poor was a question of life and death. The landowner and the merchant were ready, as they have been ready in all ages of the world, to surrender freedom into the hands of the one power which could preserve them from what they deemed to be anarchy. It was to the selfish panic of the wealthier landowners that England owed the Statutes of Labourers, with their terrible heritage of a pauper class. It was to the selfish panic of both the landowner and the merchant that she owed the despotism of the New Monarchy.

Edward the Fourth

The founder of the New Monarchy was Edward the Fourth. As a mere boy he showed himself the ablest and the most pitiless among the warriors of the civil war. In the first flush of manhood he looked on with a cool ruthlessness while grey-haired nobles were hurried to the block, or while his Lancastrian child-rival was stabbed at his feet. In his later race for power he had shown himself more subtle in his treachery than even Warwick himself. His triumph was no sooner won however than the young King seemed to abandon himself to a voluptuous indolence, to revels with the city-wives of London and the caresses of his mistress, Jane Shore. Tall in stature and of singular beauty, his winning manners and gay carelessness of bearing secured him a popularity which had been denied to nobler kings. But his indolence and gaiety were mere veils beneath which Edward shrouded a profound political ability. No one could contrast more utterly in outer appearance with the subtle sovereigns of his time, with Louis the Eleventh or Ferdinand of Arragon, but his work was the same as theirs, and it was done even more completely. While jesting with aldermen, or dallying with his mistresses, or idling over the new pages from the printing-press at Westminster, Edward was silently laying the foundations of an absolute rule which Henry the Seventh did little more than develop and consolidate. The almost total discontinuance of Parliamentary life was in itself a revolution. Up to this moment the two Houses had played a part which became more and more prominent in the government of the realm. Under the two first Kings of the House of Lancaster they had been summoned almost every year. Not only had the right of self-taxation and initiation of laws been yielded explicitly to the Commons, but they had taken part in the work of Government itself, had directed the application of subsidies and called the Royal ministers to account by Parliamentary impeachments. Under Henry the Sixth an important step in constitutional progress had been made by abandoning the old form of presenting the requests of the Parliament in the form of petitions which were subsequently moulded into statutes by the Royal Council; the statute itself, in its final form, was now presented for the Royal assent, and the Crown was deprived of its former privilege of modifying it. Not only does this

progress cease, but the legislative activity of Parliament itself comes abruptly to an end. The reign of Edward the Fourth is the first since that of John in which not a single law which promoted freedom or remedied the abuses of power was even proposed to Parliament. The necessity for summoning the two Houses had, in fact, been removed by the enormous tide of wealth which the confiscations of the civil war poured into the Royal Treasury. In the single bill of attainder which followed the victory of Towton, twelve great nobles and more than a hundred knights and squires were stripped of their estates to the King's profit. It was said that nearly a fifth of the land had passed into the Royal possession at one period or another of the civil war. Edward added to his resources by trading on a vast scale. The Royal ships, freighted with tin, wool, and cloth, made the name of the merchant-king famous in the ports of Italy and Greece. The enterprises he planned against France, though frustrated by the refusal of Charles of Burgundy to co-operate with him in them, afforded a fresh financial resource; and the subsidies granted for a war which never took place swelled the Royal exchequer. But the pretext of war enabled Edward not only to increase his hoard, but to deal a deadly blow at liberty. Setting aside the usage of loans sanctioned by the authority of Parliament, Edward called before him the merchants of the city and requested from each a present or "benevolence," in proportion to the need. Their compliance with his prayer was probably aided by his popularity with the merchant class, but the system of "benevolence" was soon to be developed into the forced loans of Wolsey and the Ship-money of Charles the First. It was to Edward that his Tudor successors owed their elaborate spy-system, the introduction of the rack into the Tower, and the practice of Royal interference with the purity of justice. In the history of intellectual progress alone his reign takes a brighter colour, and the founder of the New Monarchy presents his one solitary claim to our regard as the patron of Caxton.

1471 to 1509

1474

Literature indeed seemed at this moment to have died as utterly as freedom itself. The genius of Chaucer, and of the one or more poets whose works have been confounded with Chaucer's, defied for a while the pedantry, the affectation, the barrenness of their age; but the sudden close of this poetic outburst left England to a crowd of poetasters, compilers, scribblers of interminable moralities, rimers of chronicles, and translators from the worn-out field of French romance. Some faint trace of the liveliness and beauty of older models lingers among the heavy platitudes of Gower, but even this vanished from the didactic puerilities, the prosaic commonplaces, of Occleve and Lydgate. The literature of the Middle Ages was dying out with the Middle Ages themselves; in letters as in life their thirst for knowledge had spent itself in the barren mazes of the scholastic philosophy, their ideal of warlike nobleness faded away before the gaudy travestie of a spurious chivalry, and the mystic enthusiasm of their

Literature after Chaucer

1471 to 1509

devotion shrunk at the touch of persecution into a narrow orthodoxy and a flat morality. The clergy, who had concentrated in themselves the intellectual effort of the older time, were ceasing to be an intellectual class at all. Their monasteries were no longer seats of learning. "I found in them," said Poggio, an Italian traveller twenty years after Chaucer's death, "men given up to sensuality in abundance, but very few lovers of learning, and those of a barbarous sort, skilled more in quibbles and sophisms than in literature." The erection of colleges, which was beginning, could not arrest the quick decline of the universities both in numbers and learning. The students at Oxford amounted to but a fifth of those who had attended its lectures a century before, and "Oxford Latin" became proverbial for a jargon in which the very tradition of grammar had been lost. All literary production was nearly at an end; there is not a single work, for instance, either in Latin or English which we can refer to the last years of the reign of Edward the Fourth. Historical composition lingered on indeed in compilations of extracts from past writers, such as make up the so-called works of Walsingham, in jejune monastic annals like those of St. Albans, or worthless popular compendiums like those of Fabyan and Harding. But the only real trace of mental activity is to be found in the numerous treatises on alchemy and magic on the elixir of life or the philosopher's stone, the fungous growth which most unequivocally witnesses to the progress of intellectual decay. On the other hand, while the purely literary class was thus dying out, a glance beneath the surface shows us the stir of a new interest in knowledge among the masses of the people itself. Books are far from being the only indication of a people's progress in knowledge, and the correspondence of the Paston family, which has been happily preserved, displays a fluency and vivacity as well as a grammatical correctness which would have been impossible in familiar letters a hundred years before. The very character of the authorship of the time, its love of compendiums and abridgements of the scientific and historical knowledge of its day, its dramatic performances of mysteries, the commonplace morality of its poets, the popularity of its rhymed chronicles are additional proofs that literature was ceasing to be the possession of a purely intellectual class and was now beginning to appeal to the people at large. The increased use of linen paper in place of the costlier parchment helped in the popularization of letters. In no former age had finer copies of books been produced; in none had so many been transcribed. Abroad this increased demand for their production caused the processes of copying and illuminating manuscripts to be transferred from the scriptoria of the religious houses into the hands of trade-guilds, like the Guild of St. John at Bruges, or the Brothers of the Pen at Brussels. It was, in fact, this increase of demand for books, pamphlets, or fly-sheets especially of a grammatical or religious character, in the middle of the fifteenth century that brought about the introduction of

printing. We meet with it first in rude sheets simply struck off from wooden blocks, "block-books" as they are now called, and later on in works printed from separate and moveable types. Originating at Maintz with the three famous printers, Gutenberg, Fust, and Schœffer, the new process travelled southward to Strasburg, crossed the Alps to Venice, where it lent itself through the Aldi to the spread of Greek literature in Europe, and then floated down the Rhine to Cologne and the towns of Flanders. It was probably at the press of Colard Mansion, in a little room over the porch of St. Donat's at Bruges, that Caxton learnt the art which he was the first to introduce into England. 1471 to 1500

A Kentish boy by birth, but apprenticed to a London Mercer, William Caxton had already spent thirty years of his manhood in Flanders, as Governor of the English guild of Merchant Adventurers there, when we find him engaged as copyist in the service of the Duchess of Burgundy. But the tedious process of copying was soon thrown aside for the new art which Colard Mansion had introduced into Bruges. "For as much as in the writing of the same," Caxton tells us in the preface to his first printed work, the Tales of Troy, "my pen is worn, my hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with over much looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labour as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body, and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address to them as hastily as I might the said book, therefore I have practised and learned at my great charge and dispense to ordain this said book in print after the manner and form as ye may see, and is not written with pen and ink as other books be, to the end that every man may have them at once, for all the books of this story here emprynted as ye see were begun in one day and also finished in one day." The printing press was the precious freight he brought back to England, after an absence of five-and-thirty years. Through the next fifteen, at an age when other men look for ease and retirement, we see him plunging with characteristic energy into his new occupation. His "red pale" invited buyers to the press established in the Almonry at Westminster, a little enclosure containing a chapel and almshouses (swept away since Caxton's time by later buildings) near the west front of the church, where the alms of the abbey were distributed to the poor. "If it please any man, spiritual or temporal," runs his advertisement, "to buy any pyes of two or three commemorations of Salisbury all emprinted after the form of the present letter, which be well and truly correct, let him come to Westminster into the Almonry at the red pale, and he shall have them good chepe." He was a practical man of business, as this advertisement shows, no rival of the Venetian Aldi or of the classical printers of Rome, but resolved to get a living from his trade, supplying priests with service books, and preachers with sermons, furnishing the clerk with his "Golden Legend," and knight and baron with "joyous Caxton 1476

1471 to 1509

and pleasant histories of chivalry." But while careful to win his daily bread, he found time to do much for what of higher literature lay fairly to hand. He printed all the English poetry of any moment which was then in existence. His reverence for "that worshipful man, Geoffry Chaucer," who "ought eternally to be remembered," is shown not merely by this edition of the "Canterbury Tales," but by his reprint of them when a purer text of the poem offered itself. The poems of Lydgate and Gower were soon added to those of Chaucer. The Chronicle of Brut and Higden's "Polychronicon" were the only available works of an historical character then existing in the English tongue, and Caxton not only printed them but himself continued the latter up to his own time. A translation of Boethius, a version of the Æneid from the French, and a tract or two of Cicero, were the stray first-fruits of the classical press in England.

Caxton's Translations

Busy as was Caxton's printing-press, he was even busier as a translator than as a printer. More than four thousand of his printed pages are from works of his own rendering. The need of these translations shows the popular drift of literature at the time; but keen as the demand seems to have been, there is nothing mechanical in the temper with which Caxton prepared to meet it. A natural, simple-hearted literary taste and enthusiasm, especially for the style and forms of language, breaks out in his curious prefaces. "Having no work in hand," he says in the preface to his Æneid, "I sitting in my study where as lay many divers pamphlets and books, happened that to my hand came a little book in French, which late was translated out of Latin by some noble clerk of France—which book is named Eneydos, and made in Latin by that noble poet and great clerk Vergyl—in which book I had great pleasure by reason of the fair and honest termes and wordes in French which I never saw to-fore-like, none so pleasant nor so well ordered, which book as me seemed should be much requisite for noble men to see, as well for the eloquence as the histories; and when I had advised me to this said book I deliberated and concluded to translate it into English, and forthwith took a pen and ink and wrote a leaf or twain." But the work of translation involved a choice of English which made Caxton's work important in the history of our language. He stood between two schools of translation, that of French affectation and English pedantry. It was a moment when the character of our literary tongue was being settled, and it is curious to see in his own words the struggle over it which was going on in Caxton's time. "Some honest and great clerks have been with me and desired me to write the most curious terms that I could find;" on the other hand, "some gentlemen of late blamed me, saying that in my translations I had over many curious terms which could not be understood of common people, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations." "Fain would I please every man," comments the good-humoured printer, but his sturdy sense saved him alike from the temptations

of the court and the schools. His own taste pointed to English, but "to the common terms that be daily used" rather than to the English of his antiquarian advisers. "I took an old book and read therein, and certainly the English was so rude and broad I could not well understand it," while the Old-English charters which the Abbot of Westminster fetched as models from the archives of his house, seemed "more like to Dutch than to English." On the other hand, to adopt current phraseology was by no means easy at a time when even the speech of common talk was in a state of rapid flux. "Our language now used varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was born." Not only so, but the tongue of each shire was still peculiar to itself, and hardly intelligible to men of another county. "Common English that is spoken in one shire varieth from another so much, that in my days happened that certain merchants were in a ship in Thames, for to have sailed over the sea into Zealand, and for lack of wind they tarried at Foreland, and went on land for to refresh them. And one of them, named Sheffield, a mercer, came into a house and asked for meat, and especially he asked them after eggs. And the good wife answered that she could speak no French. And the merchant was angry, for he also could speak no French, but would have had eggs, but she understood him not. And then at last another said he would have eyren, then the good wife said she understood him well. Lo! what should a man in these days now write," adds the puzzled printer, "eggs or eyren? certainly it is hard to please everyman by cause of diversity and change of language." His own mother-tongue, too, was that of "Kent in the Weald, where I doubt not is spoken as broad and rude English as in any place of England;" and coupling this with his long absence in Flanders, we can hardly wonder at the confession he makes over his first translation, that "when all these things came to fore me, after that I had made and written a five or six quires, I fell in despair of this work, and purposed never to have continued therein, and the quires laid apart, and in two years after laboured no more in this work." 1471 to 1509

Literature and the Nobles 1491

He was still, however, busy translating when he died. All difficulties, in fact, were lightened by the general interest which his labours aroused. When the length of the "Golden Legend" makes him "half desperate to have accomplisht it" and ready to "lay it apart," the Earl of Arundel solicits him in nowise to leave it and promises a yearly fee of a buck in summer and a doe in winter, once it were done. "Many noble and divers gentle men of this realm came and demanded many and often times wherefore I have not made and imprinted the noble history of the 'San Graal.'" We see his visitors discussing with the sagacious printer the historic existence of Arthur. Duchess Margaret of Somerset lends him her "Blanchadine and Eglantine;" the Archdeacon of Colchester brings him his translation of the work called "Cato;" a mercer of London presses him to undertake the "Royal Book" of Philip le Bel. The Queen's brother, Earl Rivers, chats with him

1471 to 1509

over his own translation of the "Sayings of the Philosophers." Even kings showed their interest in his work; his "Tully" was printed under the patronage of Edward the Fourth, his "Order of Chivalry" dedicated to Richard the Third, his "Facts of Arms" published at the desire of Henry the Seventh. The Royal Houses of York and Lancaster, in fact, rivalled each other in their patronage of such literature as they could find. The fashion of large and gorgeous libraries had passed from the French to the English princes of the time: Henry the Sixth had a valuable collection of books; that of the Louvre was seized by Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, and formed the basis of the fine library which he presented to the University of Oxford. The great nobles took a far more active and personal part in the literary revival. The warrior, Sir John Fastolf, was a well-known lover of books. Earl Rivers was himself one of the authors of the day; he found leisure in the intervals of pilgrimages and politics to translate the "Sayings of the Philosophers" and a couple of religious tracts for Caxton's press. A friend of far greater intellectual distinction, however, than these was found in John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester. He had wandered during the reign of Henry the Sixth in search of learning to Italy, had studied at her universities, and become a teacher at Padua, where the elegance of his Latinity drew tears from one of the most learned of the Popes, Pius the Second, better known as Æneas Sylvius. Caxton can find no words warm enough to express his admiration of one "which in his time flowered in virtue and cunning, to whom I know none like among the lords of the temporality in science and moral virtue." But the ruthlessness of the Renascence appeared in Tiptoft side by side with its intellectual vigour, and the fall of one whose cruelty had earned him the surname of "the Butcher" even amidst the horrors of the civil war was greeted with sorrow by none but the faithful printer. "What great loss was it," he says in a preface long after his fall, "of that noble, virtuous, and well-disposed lord; when I remember and advertise his life, his science, and his virtue, we thinketh (God not displeased) over great a loss of such a man, considering his estate and cunning."

Richard the Third

Among the group who encouraged the press of Caxton we have already seen the figure of the King's young brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Able and ruthless as Edward himself, the Duke had watched keenly the increase of public discontent as his brother's policy developed itself, and had founded on it a scheme of daring

1483

ambition. On the King's death Richard hastened to secure the person of his Royal nephew, Edward the Fifth, to hurry the Queen's family to execution, and to receive from the hands of Parliament the office of Protector of the realm. As yet he had acted in strict union with the Royal Council, but hardly a month had passed, when suddenly entering the Council chamber, he charged Lord Hastings, the favourite minister of the late King, who still presided over its meetings, with sorcery and designs upon

his life. As he dashed his hand upon the table the room was filled with soldiers. "I will not dine," said the Duke, addressing Hastings, "till they have brought me your head;" and the powerful minister was hurried to instant execution in the court-yard of the Tower. His colleagues were thrown into prison, and every check on the Duke's designs was removed. Edward's marriage had always been unpopular, and Richard ventured, on the plea of a pre-contract on his brother's part, to declare it invalid and its issue illegitimate. Only one step remained to be taken, and two months after his brother's death the Duke listened with a show of reluctance to the prayer of the Parliament, and consented to accept the crown. Daring, however, as was his natural temper, it was not to mere violence that he trusted in this seizure of the throne. The personal popularity of Edward had hardly restrained the indignation with which the nation felt the gradual approach of tyranny throughout his reign; and it was as the restorer of its older liberties that Richard appealed for popular support. "We be determined," said the citizens of London in a petition to the new monarch, "rather to adventure and to commit us to the peril of our lives and jeopardy of death, than to live in such thraldom and bondage as we have lived long time heretofore, oppressed and injured by extortions and new impositions against the laws of God and man and the liberty and laws of this realm, wherein every Englishman is inherited." The new King met the appeal by again convoking Parliament, which, as we have seen, had been all but discontinued under Edward, and by sweeping measures of reform. In the one session of his brief reign he declared the practice of extorting money by "benevolences" illegal, while numerous grants of pardons and remission of forfeitures reversed in some measure the policy of terror by which Edward at once held the country in awe and filled his treasury. The energy of the new government was seen in the numerous statutes which broke the slumbers of Parliamentary legislation. A series of mercantile enactments strove to protect the growing interests of English commerce. The King's interest in literature showed itself in the provision that no statutes should act as a hindrance "to any artificer or merchant stranger, of what nation or country he be, for bringing unto this realm or selling by retail or otherwise of any manner of books, written or imprinted." His prohibition of the iniquitous seizure of goods before conviction of felony, which had prevailed during Edward's reign, his liberation of the bondmen who still remained unenfranchised on the Royal domain, and his religious foundations, show Richard's keen anxiety to purchase a popularity in which the bloody opening of his reign might be forgotten. But the gratitude which he had earned by his restoration of the older liberty was swept away in the universal horror at a new deed of blood. His young nephews, Edward the Fifth and his brother, the Duke of York, had been flung at his accession into the Tower; and the sudden disappearance of the two boys, murdered, as it was alleged, by their uncle's order,

1471 to 1509

1471 to 1509

united the whole nation against him. Morton, the exiled Bishop of Ely, took advantage of the general hatred and of the common hostility of both Yorkists and Lancastrians to the Royal murderer to link both parties in a wide conspiracy. Of the line of John of Gaunt no lawful issue remained, but the House of Somerset had sprung, as we have seen, from his union with his mistress Catherine Swynford, and the last representative of this line, the Lady Margaret Beaufort, had married Edmund Tudor and become the mother of Henry, Earl of Richmond. In the bill which legitimated the Beauforts a clause had been inserted by the king which barred their right of succession to the crown; but as the last remaining scion of the line of Lancaster Henry's claim to it was acknowledged by the partizans of his House, and he had been driven to seek a refuge in Brittany from the jealous hostility of the Yorkist sovereigns. Morton, who had joined him in his exile, induced him to take advantage of the horror with which Richard was regarded even by the Yorkists themselves, and to unite both parties in his favour by a promise of marriage with Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Edward the Fourth. The result of this masterly policy was seen as soon as the Earl landed, in spite of Richard's vigilance, at Milford Haven, and advanced through Wales. He no sooner encountered the Royal army at Bosworth Field in Leicestershire

1485

than treachery decided the day. Abandoned ere the battle began by a division of his forces under Lord Stanley, and as it opened by a second body under the Earl of Northumberland, Richard dashed, with a cry of "Treason, Treason," into the thick of the fight. In the fury of his despair he had already flung the Lancastrian standard to the ground and hewed his way into the very presence of his rival, when he fell overpowered by numbers, and the crown which he had worn, and which was found as the struggle ended lying near a hawthorn bush, was placed on the head of the conqueror.

Henry the Seventh

With the accession of Henry the Seventh ended the long bloodshed of the civil wars. The two warring lines were united by his marriage with Elizabeth: his only dangerous rivals were removed by the successive deaths of the nephews of Edward the Fourth, the Earl of Warwick (a son of Edward's brother the Duke of Clarence) and John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln (a son of Edward's sister), who had been acknowledged as his successor by Richard the Third. Two remarkable impostors succeeded for a time in exciting formidable revolts, Lambert Simnel, the son of a joiner at Oxford, under the name of the Earl of Warwick, and Perkin Warbeck, a native of Tournay, who personated the Duke of York, the second of the children murdered in the Tower. Defeat, however, reduced the first to the post of scullion in the Royal kitchen; and the second, after far stranger adventures, and the recognition of his claims by the Kings of Scotland and France, as well as by the Duchess-Dowager of Burgundy, whom he claimed as his aunt, was captured and hanged at Tyburn. Revolt only proved more

1471 to 1509

clearly the strength which had been given to the New Monarchy by the revolution which had taken place in the art of war. The introduction of gunpowder had ruined feudalism. The mounted and heavily-armed knight gave way to the meaner footman. Fortresses which had been impregnable against the attacks of the Middle Ages crumbled before the new artillery. Although gunpowder had been in use as early as Cressy it was not till the accession of the House of Lancaster that it was really brought into effective employment as a military resource. But the revolution in warfare was immediate. The wars of Henry the Fifth were wars of sieges. The "Last of the Barons," as Warwick has picturesquely been styled, relied mainly on his train of artillery. Artillery gave Henry the Seventh his easy victory over a rising of the Cornish insurgents, the most formidable danger which threatened his throne. The strength which the change gave to the Crown was, in fact, almost irresistible. Throughout the Middle Ages the call of a great baron had been enough to raise a formidable revolt. Yeomen and retainers took down the bow from their chimney corner, knights buckled on their armour, and in a few days an army threatened the throne. But without artillery such an army was now helpless, and the one train of artillery in the kingdom lay at the disposal of the King. It was the consciousness of his strength which enabled the new sovereign to quietly resume the policy of Edward the Fourth. He was forced, indeed, by the circumstances of his descent to base his right to the throne on a purely Parliamentary title. Without reference either to the claim of blood or conquest, the Houses enacted simply "that the inheritance of the Crown should be, rest, remain, and abide in the most Royal person of their sovereign lord, King Henry the Seventh, and the heirs of his body lawfully ensuing." But the policy of Edward was faithfully followed, and Parliament was only once convened during the last thirteen years of Henry's reign. The chief aim, indeed, of the King appeared to be the accumulation of a treasure which should relieve him from the need of appealing for its aid. Subsidies granted for the support of a war with France, which Henry evaded, were carefully hoarded by his grasping economy, and swelled by the revival of dormant claims of the crown, by the exaction of fines for the breach of forgotten tenures, and by a host of petty extortions. The discontinuance of Parliament was followed by the revival of Benevolences. A dilemma of his favourite minister, which received the name of "Morton's fork," extorted gifts to the exchequer from men who lived handsomely on the ground that their wealth was manifest, and from those who lived plainly on the plea that economy had made them wealthy. So successful were these efforts that at the end of his reign Henry bequeathed a hoard of two millions to his successor. The same imitation of Edward's policy was seen in Henry's civil government. Broken as was the strength of the baronage, there still remained lords whom the new monarch watched with a jealous solicitude.

1471 to 1509

Their power lay in the hosts of disorderly retainers who swarmed round their houses, ready to furnish a force in case of revolt, while in peace they became centres of outrage and defiance to the law. Edward had ordered the dissolution of these military households in his Statute of Liveries, and the statute was enforced by Henry with the utmost severity. On a visit to the Earl of Oxford, one of the most devoted adherents of the Lancastrian cause, the King found two long lines of liveried retainers drawn up to receive him. "I thank you for your good cheer, my Lord," said Henry as they parted, "but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you." The Earl was glad to escape with a fine of £10,000. It was with a special view to the suppression of this danger that Henry employed the criminal jurisdiction of the Royal Council, which had almost fallen into desuetude, and whose immense development at a later time furnished his son with his readiest instrument of tyranny. A yet more dangerous innovation, the law which enabled justices of assize or of the peace to try all cases save those of treason and felony without a jury, may have been a merely temporary measure for the redress of disorder, and was repealed at the opening of the next reign. But steady as was the drift of Henry's policy in the direction of despotism, we see no traces of the originality or genius with which the fancy of later historians has invested him. His temper, silent, jealous, but essentially commonplace, was content to follow out, tamely and patiently, the plans of Edward, without anticipating the more terrible policy of Wolsey or of Cromwell. Wrapt in schemes of foreign intrigue, to which we shall afterwards refer, he looked with dread and suspicion on the one movement which broke the apathy of his reign, the great intellectual revolution which bears the name of the Revival of Letters.

Section IV.—The New Learning, 1509—1520

[*Authorities.*—The "Utopia" has been edited by Churton Collins; the "Letters of Erasmus" by P. S. Allen. Seebohm, "Oxford Reformers"; Froude, "Life and Letters of Erasmus"; and Hallam, "Literature of Europe," illustrate the literary revival. For More, see the biography by his son-in-law, Roper.]

The New Learning

While England cowered before the horrors of civil war, or slumbered beneath the apathetic rule of Henry the Seventh, the world around her was passing through changes more momentous than any it had witnessed since the victory of Christianity and the fall of the Roman Empire. Its physical bounds were suddenly enlarged. The discoveries of Copernicus revealed to man the secret of the universe. The daring of the Portuguese mariners doubled the Cape of Good Hope and anchored their merchant fleets in the harbours of India. Columbus crossed the untraversed ocean to add a New World to the Old. Sebastian Cabot, starting

1509 to 1520

from the port of Bristol, threaded his way among the icebergs of Labrador. This sudden contact with new lands, new faiths, new races of men quickened the slumbering intelligence of Europe into a strange curiosity. The first book of voyages that told of the Western World, the travels of Amerigo Vespucci, were, at the time of More's Utopia, "in every body's hands." The Utopia itself, in its wide range of speculation on every subject of human thought and action, tells us how roughly and utterly the narrowness and limitation of the Middle Ages had been broken up. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks, and the flight of its Greek scholars to the shores of Italy, opened anew the science and literature of the older world at the very hour when the intellectual energy of the Middle Ages had sunk into exhaustion. Not a single book of any real value, save those of Sir John Fortescue and Philippe de Commines, was produced north of the Alps during the fifteenth century. In England, as we have seen, literature had reached its lowest ebb. It was at this moment that the exiled Greek scholars were welcomed in Italy, and that Florence, so long the home of freedom and of art, became the home of an intellectual Revival. The poetry of Homer, the drama of Sophocles, the philosophy of Aristotle and of Plato woke again to life beneath the shadow of the mighty dome with which Brunelleschi had just crowned the City by the Arno. All the restless energy which Florence had so long thrown into the cause of liberty she flung, now that her liberty was reft from her, into the cause of letters. The galleys of her merchants brought back manuscripts from the East as the most precious portion of their freight. In the palaces of her nobles fragments of classic sculpture ranged themselves beneath the frescoes of Ghirlandajo. The recovery of a treatise of Cicero or a tract of Sallust from the dust of a monastic library was welcomed by the group of statesmen and artists who gathered in the Rucellai gardens with a thrill of enthusiasm. Crowds of foreign scholars soon flocked over the Alps to learn Greek, the key of the new knowledge, from the Florentine teachers. Grocyn, a fellow of New College, was perhaps the first Englishman who studied under the Greek exile, Chalcondylas, and the Greek lectures which he delivered in Oxford on his return mark the opening of a new period in our history. Physical, as well as literary, activity awoke with the re-discovery of the teachers of Greece, and the continuous progress of English science may be dated from the day when Linacre, another Oxford student, returned from the lectures of the Florentine Politian to revive the older tradition of medicine by his translation of Galen. The awakening of a rational Christianity, whether in England or in the Teutonic world at large, begins with the Florentine studies of John Colet.

Colet at Oxford

From the first it was manifest that the revival of letters would take a tone in England very different from the tone it had taken in Italy, a tone less literary, less largely human, but more moral, more religious, more practical in its bearings both upon society

1500 to 1520

and politics. The vigour and earnestness of Colet were the best proof of the strength with which the new movement was to affect English religion. He came back from Florence to Oxford utterly untouched by the Platonic mysticism or the semi-serious infidelity which characterized the group of scholars round Lorenzo the Magnificent. He was hardly more influenced by their literary enthusiasm. The knowledge of Greek seems to have had one almost exclusive end for him, and this was a religious end. Greek was the key by which he could unlock the Gospels and the New Testament, and in these he thought that he could find a new religious standing-ground. It was this resolve of Colet to fling aside the traditional dogmas of his day and to discover a rational and practical religion in the Gospels themselves, which gave its peculiar stamp to the theology of the Renascence. His faith stood simply on a vivid realization of the person of Christ. In the prominence which such a view gave to the moral life, in his free criticism of the earlier Scriptures, in his tendency to simple forms of doctrine and confessions of faith, Colet struck the key-note of a mode of religious thought as strongly in contrast with that of the later Reformation as with that of Catholicism itself. The allegorical and mystical theology on which the Middle Ages spent their intellectual vigour to such little purpose fell at one blow before his rejection of all but the historical and grammatical sense of the Biblical text. The great fabric of belief built up by the mediæval doctors seemed to him simply "the corruptions of the Schoolmen." In the Life and Sayings of its Founder he found a simple and rational Christianity, whose fittest expression was the Apostles' creed. "About the rest," he said with characteristic impatience, "let divines dispute as they will." Of his attitude towards the coarser aspects of the current religion his behaviour at a later time before the famous shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury gives us a rough indication. As the blaze of its jewels, its costly sculptures, its elaborate metal-work burst on Colet's view, he suggested with bitter irony that a saint so lavish to the poor in his lifetime would certainly prefer that they should possess the wealth heaped round him since his death, and rejected with petulant disgust the rags of the martyr which were offered for his adoration, and the shoe which was offered for his kiss. The earnestness, the religious zeal, the very impatience and want of sympathy with the past which we see in every word and act of the man, burst out in the lectures on St. Paul's Epistles which he delivered at Oxford. Even to the most

1490

critical among his hearers he seemed "like one inspired, raised in voice, eye, his whole countenance and mien, out of himself." Severe as was the outer life of the new teacher, a severity marked by his plain black robe and the frugal table which he preserved amidst his later dignities, his lively conversation, his frank simplicity, the purity and nobleness of his life, even the keen outbursts of his troublesome temper, endeared him to a group of scholars among whom Erasmus and Thomas More stood in the foremost rank.

"Greece has crossed the Alps," cried the exiled Argyropulos on hearing a translation of Thucydides by the German Reuchlin; but the glory, whether of Reuchlin or of the Teutonic scholars who followed him, was soon eclipsed by that of Erasmus. His enormous industry, the vast store of classical learning which he gradually accumulated, Erasmus shared with others of his day. In patristic reading he may have stood beneath Luther; in originality and profoundness of thought he was certainly inferior to More. His theology, though he made a far greater mark on the world by it than even by his scholarship, we have seen that he derived almost without change from Colet. But his combination of vast learning with keen observation, of acuteness of remark with a lively fancy, of genial wit with a perfect good sense—his union of as sincere a piety and as profound a zeal for rational religion as Colet's with a dispassionate fairness towards older faiths, a large love of secular culture, and a genial freedom and play of mind — this union was his own, and it was through this that Erasmus embodied for the Teutonic peoples the quickening influence of the New Learning during the long scholar-life which began at Paris and ended amidst darkness and sorrow at Basle. At the time of Colet's return from Italy Erasmus was young and comparatively unknown, but the chivalrous enthusiasm of the new movement breaks out in his letters from Paris, whither he had wandered as a scholar. "I have given up my whole soul to Greek learning," he writes, "and as soon as I get any money I shall buy Greek books — and then I shall buy some clothes." It was in despair of reaching Italy that the young scholar made his way to Oxford, as the one place on this side the Alps where he would be enabled through the teaching of Grocyn to acquire a knowledge of Greek. But he had no sooner arrived there than all feeling of regret vanished away. "I have found in Oxford," he writes, "so much polish and learning that now I hardly care about going to Italy at all, save for the sake of having been there. When I listen to my friend Colet it seems like listening to Plato himself. Who does not wonder at the wide range of Grocyn's knowledge? What can be more searching, deep, and refined than the judgment of Linacre? When did Nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing, and happy than the temper of Thomas More?" But the new movement was already spreading beyond the bounds of Oxford. If, like every other living impulse, it shrank from the cold suspicion of the King, it found shelter under the patronage of his minister. Immersed as Archbishop Warham was in the business of the State, he was no mere politician. The eulogies which Erasmus lavished on him while he lived, his praises of the Primate's learning, of his ability in business, his pleasant humour, his modesty, his fidelity to friends, may pass for what eulogies of living men are commonly worth. But it is difficult to doubt the sincerity of the glowing picture which he drew of him when death had destroyed all interest in mere adulation. The letters indeed which passed between the

1509 to 1520 — Erasmus in England

1499

1509 to 1530

great Churchman and the wandering scholar, the quiet, simple-hearted grace which amidst constant instances of munificence preserved the perfect equality of literary friendship, the enlightened piety to which Erasmus could address the noble words of his preface to St. Jerome, confirm the judgment of every good man of Warham's day. In the simplicity of his life the Archbishop offered a striking contrast to the luxurious nobles of his time. He cared nothing for the pomp, the sensual pleasures, the hunting and dicing in which they too commonly indulged. An hour's pleasant reading, a quiet chat with some learned new-comer, alone broke the endless round of civil and ecclesiastical business. Few men realized so thoroughly as Warham the new conception of an intellectual and moral equality before which the old social distinctions of the world were to vanish away. His favourite relaxation was to sup among a group of scholarly visitors, enjoying their fun and retorting with fun of his own. But the scholar-world found more than supper or fun at the Primate's board. His purse was ever open to relieve their poverty. "Had I found such a patron in my youth," Erasmus wrote long after, "I too might have been counted among the fortunate ones." It was with Grocyn that Erasmus rowed up the river to Warham's board at Lambeth, and in spite of an unpromising beginning the acquaintance turned out wonderfully well. The Primate loved him, Erasmus wrote home, as if he were his father or his brother, and his generosity surpassed that of all his friends. He offered him a sinecure, and when he declined it he bestowed on him a pension of a hundred crowns a year. When Erasmus wandered to Paris it was Warham's invitation which recalled him to England. When the rest of his patrons left him to starve on the sour beer of Cambridge it was Warham who sent him fifty angels. "I wish they were thirty legions of them," the old man puns in his good-humoured way.

Henry the Eighth

The hopes of the little group of scholars were held in check during the life of Henry the Seventh by his suspicion and ill will, but a "New Order," to use their own enthusiastic term, dawned on them with the accession of his son. Henry the Eighth had

1509

hardly completed his eighteenth year when he mounted the throne, but the beauty of his person, his vigour and skill in arms, seemed only matched by the generosity of his temper and the nobleness of his political aims. The abuses of the previous reign, the extortion of the Royal treasury, were at once remedied. Empson and Dudley, the ministers of his father's tyranny, were brought to the block, and the rights of the subject protected by a limitation of the time within which actions for recovery of its rights might be brought by the Crown. No accession ever excited higher expectations among a people than that of Henry the Eighth. Pole, his bitterest enemy, confessed at a later time, that the King was of a temper at the beginning of his reign "from which all excellent things might have been hoped." His sympathies were from the first openly on the side of the New Learning; for Henry was not

only himself a fair scholar, but even in boyhood had roused by his wit and attainments the wonder of Erasmus. The great scholar hurried back to England to pour out his exultation in the "Praise of Folly," his song of triumph over the old world of ignorance and bigotry which was to vanish away before the light and knowledge of the new reign. Folly, in his amusing little book, mounts a pulpit in cap and bells and pelts with her satire the absurdities of the world around her, the superstition of the monk, the pedantry of the grammarian, the dogmatism of the doctors of the schools, the cruelty of the sportsman. Gaily as it reads, the book was written in More's house to while away hours of sickness. The irony of Erasmus was backed by the earnestness of Colet. Four years before he had been called from Oxford to the Deanery of St. Paul's, and he now became the great preacher of his day, the predecessor of Latimer in his simplicity, his directness, and his force. But for the success of the new reform, a reform which could only be wrought out by the tranquil spread of knowledge and the gradual enlightenment of the human conscience, the one thing needful was peace; and the young King to whom the scholar-group looked was already longing for war. Long as peace had been established between the two countries, the designs of England upon the French crown had never been really abandoned. Edward the Fourth and Henry the Seventh had each threatened France with invasion, and only withdrawn on a humiliating payment of large sums by Lewis the Eleventh. But the policy of Lewis, his extinction of the great feudatories, and the administrative centralization which he was the first to introduce, raised his kingdom ere the close of his reign to a height far above that of its European rivals. The power of France, in fact, was only counterbalanced by that of Spain, which had become a great state through the union of Castile and Arragon, and where the prudence of Ferdinand was suddenly backed by the stroke of good fortune which added the New World to the dominion of Castile. Too weak to meet France single-handed, Henry the Seventh saw in an alliance with Spain, not merely a security against his 'hereditary enemy,' but an admirable starting point in case of any English attempt for the recovery of Guienne, and this alliance had been cemented by the marriage of his eldest son, Arthur, with Ferdinand's daughter, Catherine of Aragon. The match was broken by the death of the young bridegroom; but Henry the Eighth clung to his father's policy, and a Papal dispensation enabled Catherine to wed the brother of her late husband, the young sovereign himself. Throughout the first years of his reign, amidst the tournaments and revelry which seemed to absorb his whole energies, Henry was in fact keenly watching the opening which the ambition of France began to afford for a renewal of the old struggle. Under the successors of Lewis the Eleventh the efforts of the French monarchy had been directed to the conquest of Italy. Charles the Eighth, after entering Milan and Naples in triumph, had been driven back over the Alps, but Lewis the

1509 to 1520

1510

1502 to 1520 — 1512

Twelfth had succeeded in establishing himself in Lombardy. A league of the Italian States was at last formed for his expulsion, with the Pope at its head, and to this league Spain and England gave their joint support. Of all the confederates, however, Henry alone reaped no profit from the war. "The barbarians," to use the phrase of Julius the Second, "were chased beyond the Alps;" but Ferdinand's unscrupulous adroitness only used the English force, which had landed at Fontarabia with the view of recovering Guienne, to cover his own conquest of Navarre. The shame of this fruitless campaign roused in Henry a fiercer spirit of aggression;

1513

he landed in person in the north of France, and a sudden rout of the French cavalry in an engagement near Guinegate, which received from its bloodless character the name of the Battle of the Spurs, gave him the fortresses of Terouenne and Tournay. The young conqueror was eagerly pressing on from this new base of action to the recovery of his "heritage of France," when he found himself suddenly left alone by the desertion of Ferdinand and the dissolution of the league. The millions left by his father were exhausted, his subjects had been drained by repeated subsidies, and, furious as he was at the treachery of his allies, Henry was driven to conclude an inglorious peace.

The Peace and the New Learning

To the hopes of the New Learning this sudden outbreak of the spirit of war, this change of the monarch from whom they had looked for a "new order" into a vulgar conqueror, proved a bitter disappointment. Colet thundered from the pulpit of St. Paul's, that "an unjust peace is better than the justest war," and protested that "when men out of hatred and ambition fight with and destroy one another, they fight under the banner, not of Christ, but of the Devil." Erasmus quitted Cambridge with a bitter satire against the "madness" around him. "It is the people," he said, in words which must have startled his age,—"it is the people who build cities, while the madness of princes destroys them." The sovereigns of his time appeared to him like ravenous birds pouncing with beak and claw on the hard-won wealth and knowledge of mankind. "Kings who are scarcely men," he exclaimed in bitter irony, "are called 'divine;' they are 'invincible' though they fly from every battle-field; 'serene' though they turn the world upside down in a storm of war; 'illustrious' though they grovel in ignorance of all that is noble; 'Catholic' though they follow anything rather than Christ. Of all birds the Eagle alone has seemed to wise men the type of royalty, a bird neither beautiful, nor musical, nor good for food, but murderous, greedy, hateful to all, the curse of all, and with its great powers of doing harm only surpassed by its desire to do it." It was the first time in modern history that religion had formally dissociated itself from the ambition of princes and the horrors of war, or that the new spirit of criticism had ventured not only to question but to deny what had till then seemed the primary truths of political order. We shall soon see to what further length the new specula-

tions were pushed by a greater thinker, but for the moment the indignation of the New Learning was diverted to more practical ends by the sudden peace. The silent influences of time were working, indeed, steadily for its cause. The printing press was making letters the common property of all. In the last thirty years of the fifteenth century ten thousand editions of books and pamphlets are said to have been published throughout Europe, the most important half of them of course in Italy; and all the Latin authors were accessible to every student before it closed. Almost all the more valuable authors of Greece were published in the first twenty years of the century which followed. At the moment, therefore, of the Peace the profound influence of this burst of the two great classic literatures upon the world was just making itself felt. "For the first time," to use the picturesque phrase of M. Taine, "men opened their eyes and saw." The human mind seemed to gather new energies at the sight of the vast field which opened before it. It attacked every province of knowledge, and in a few years it transformed all. Experimental science, the science of philology, the science of politics, the critical investigation of religious truth, all took their origin from this Renascence—this 'New Birth' of the world. Art, if it lost much in purity and propriety, gained in scope and in the fearlessness of its love of Nature. Literature, if crushed for the moment by the overpowering attraction of the great models of Greece and Rome, revived with a grandeur of form, a large spirit of humanity, such as it had never known since their day. In England, the influence of the new movement extended far beyond the little group in which it had a few years before seemed concentrated. The great Churchmen still remained its patrons. Langton, Bishop of Winchester, took delight in examining the young scholars of his episcopal family every evening, and sent all the most promising of them to study across the Alps. Archbishop Warham, in a similar spirit, sent Croke for education to Leipsic and Louvain. Cuthbert Tunstall, and William Latimer, men destined to strangely different fortunes, went to study together at Padua. Henry himself, bitterly as he had disappointed its hopes, remained the steady friend of the New Learning. Through all the strange changes of his terrible career the King's Court was the home of letters. Even as a boy his son, Edward the Sixth, was a fair scholar in both the classical languages. His daughter Mary wrote good Latin letters. Elizabeth, who spoke French and Italian as fluently as English, began every day with an hour's reading in the Greek Testament, the tragedies of Sophocles, or the orations of Isocrates and Demosthenes. Widely as Henry's ministers differed from one another, they all agreed in sharing and protecting the culture around them.

1509 to 1520

The New Learning and Education

The war therefore was hardly over, when the New Learning entered on its work of reform with an energy which contrasted strangely with its recent tone of despair. The election of Leo the Tenth, the fellow-student of Linacre, the friend of Erasmus,

1509 to 1520 seemed to give it the control of Christendom. The age of the turbulent, ambitious Julius was thought to be over, and the new Pope declared formally for a universal peace. "Leo," wrote an English agent at his Court, in words to which after-history lent a strange meaning, "would favour literature and the arts, busy himself in building, and enter into no war save through actual 1513 compulsion." England, under the new ministry of Wolsey, withdrew from any active interference in the struggles of the Continent, and seemed as resolute as Leo himself for peace. Colet seized the opportunity to commence the work of educational reform by the foundation of his own Grammar School, beside St. Paul's. The bent of its founder's mind was shown by the image of the Child Jesus over the master's chair, with the words "Hear ye Him" graven beneath it. "Lift up your little white hands for me," wrote the Dean to his scholars, in words which show the tenderness that lay beneath the stern outer seeming of the man,—"for me which prayeth for you to God." All the educational designs of the reformers were carried out in the new foundation. The old methods of instruction were superseded by fresh grammars composed by Erasmus and other scholars for its use. Lilly, an Oxford student who had studied Greek in the East, was placed at its head. The injunctions of the founder aimed at the union of rational religion with sound learning, at the exclusion of the scholastic logic, and at the steady diffusion of the two classical literatures. The more bigoted of the clergy were quick to take alarm. "No wonder," More wrote to the Dean, "your school raises a storm, for it is like the wooden horse in which armed Greeks were hidden for the ruin of barbarous Troy." But the cry of alarm passed helplessly away. Not only did the study of Greek creep gradually into the schools which existed, but the example of Colet was followed by a crowd of imitators. More grammar schools, it has been said, were founded in the latter years of Henry than in the three centuries before. The impulse grew happily stronger as the direct influence of the New Learning passed away. The grammar schools of Edward the Sixth and of Elizabeth, in a word the system of middle-class education which by the close of the century had changed the very face of England, were the direct results of Colet's foundation of St. Paul's. But the "armed Greeks" of More's apologue found a yet wider field in the reform of the higher education of the country. On the Universities the influence of the New Learning was like a passing from death to life. Erasmus gives us a picture of what happened at Cambridge, where he was himself for a time a teacher of Greek. "Scarcely thirty years ago nothing was taught here but the *Parva Logicalia* of Alexander, antiquated exercises from Aristotle, and the *Quæstiones* of Scotus. As time went on better studies were added, mathematics, a new, or at any rate a renovated, Aristotle, and a knowledge of Greek literature. What 1516 has been the result? The University is now so flourishing that it can compete with the best universities of the age." Latimer and

Croke returned from Italy and carried on the work of Erasmus at Cambridge, where Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, himself one of the foremost scholars of the new movement, lent it his powerful support. At Oxford the Revival met with a fiercer opposition. The contest took the form of boyish frays, in which the young partisans and opponents of the New Learning took sides as Greeks and Trojans. The King himself had to summon one of its fiercest enemies to Woodstock, and to impose silence on the tirades which were delivered from the University pulpit. The preacher alleged that he was carried away by the Spirit. "Yes," retorted the King, "by the spirit, not of wisdom, but of folly." But even at Oxford the contest was soon at an end. Fox, Bishop of Winchester, established the first Greek lecture there in his new college of Corpus Christi, and a Professorship of Greek was at a later time established by the Crown. "The students," wrote an eye-witness, "rush to Greek letters, they endure watching, fasting, toil, and hunger in the pursuit of them." The work was crowned at last by the munificent foundation of Cardinal College, to share in whose teaching Wolsey invited the most eminent of the living scholars of Europe, and for whose library he promised to obtain copies of all the manuscripts in the Vatican.

1503 to 1520

1520

As Colet had been the first to attempt the reform of English education, so he was the first to undertake the reform of the Church. Warham still flung around the movement his steady protection, and it was by his commission that Colet was enabled to address the Convocation of the Clergy in words which set before them with unsparing severity the religious ideal of the New Learning. "Would that for once," burst forth the fiery preacher, "you would remember your name and profession and take thought for the reformation of the Church! Never was it more necessary, and never did the state of the Church need more vigorous endeavours." "We are troubled with heretics," he went on, "but no heresy of theirs is so fatal to us and to the people at large as the vicious and depraved lives of the clergy. That is the worst heresy of all." It was the reform of the bishops that must precede that of the clergy, the reform of the clergy that would lead to a general revival of religion in the people at large. The accumulation of benefices, the luxury and worldliness of the priesthood, must be abandoned. The prelates ought to be busy preachers, to forsake the Court and labour in their own dioceses. Care should be taken for the ordination and promotion of worthier ministers, residence should be enforced, the low standard of clerical morality should be raised. It is plain that Colet looked forward, not to a reform of doctrine, but to a reform of life, not to a revolution which should sweep away the older superstitions which he despised, but to a regeneration of spiritual feeling before which they would inevitably vanish. He was at once charged, however, with heresy, but Warham repelled the charge with disdain. Henry himself, to whom Colet had been denounced, bade him go boldly on. "Let every man have

The New Learning and the Church

1509 to 1520

his own doctor," said the young King, after a long interview, "and let every man favour his own, but this man is the doctor for me." Still more marked than Warham's protection of Colet was the patronage which the Primate extended to the efforts of Erasmus. His edition of the works of St. Jerome had been begun under Warham's encouragement during the great scholar's residence at Cambridge, and it appeared with a dedication to the Archbishop on its title-page. That Erasmus could find protection in Warham's name for a work which boldly recalled Christendom to the path of sound Biblical criticism, that he could address him in words so outspoken as those of his preface, shows how fully the Primate sympathized with the highest efforts of the New Learning. Nowhere had the spirit of inquiry so firmly set itself against the claims of authority. "Synods and decrees, and even councils," wrote Erasmus, "are by no means in my judgment the fittest modes of repressing error, unless truth depend simply on authority. But on the contrary, the more dogmas there are, the more fruitful is the ground in producing heresies. Never was the Christian faith purer or more undefiled than when the world was content with a single creed, and that the shortest creed we have." It is touching even now to listen to such an appeal of reason and of culture against the tide of dogmatism which was soon to flood Christendom with Augsburg Confessions, and Creeds of Pope Pius, and Westminster Catechisms, and Thirty-nine Articles. The principles which Erasmus urged in his "Jerome," were urged with far greater clearness and force in a work which laid the foundations of the future Reformation, the edition of the Greek Testament on which he had been engaged at Cambridge, and whose production was almost wholly due to the encouragement and assistance he received from English scholars. In itself the book was a bold defiance of theological tradition. It set aside the Latin version of the Vulgate, which had secured universal acceptance in the Church. Its method of interpretation was based, not on received dogmas, but on the literal meaning of the text. Its real end was the end at which Colet had aimed in his Oxford lectures. Erasmus desired to set Christ himself in the place of the Church, to recall men from the teachings of Christian theologians to the teachings of the Founder of Christianity. The whole value of the Gospels to him lay in the vividness with which they brought home to their readers the personal impression of Christ himself. "Were we to have seen him with our own eyes, we should not have so intimate a knowledge as they give us of Christ, speaking, healing, dying, rising again, as it were, in our very presence." All the superstitions of mediæval worship faded away in the light of this personal worship of Christ. "If the footprints of Christ are shown us in any place, we kneel down and adore them. Why do we not rather venerate the living and breathing picture of him in these books? We deck statues of wood and stone with gold and gems for the love of Christ. Yet they only profess to represent to us the outer form of his body, while these

books present us with a living picture of his holy mind." In the same way the actual teaching of Christ was made to supersede the mysterious dogmas of the older ecclesiastical teaching. "As though Christ taught such subtleties," burst out Erasmus: "subtleties that can scarcely be understood even by a few theologians—or as though the strength of the Christian religion consisted in man's ignorance of it! It may be the safer course," he goes on, with characteristic irony, "to conceal the state-mysteries of kings, but Christ desired his mysteries to be spread abroad as openly as was possible." In the diffusion, in the universal knowledge of the teaching of Christ the foundation of a reformed Christianity had still, he urged, to be laid. With the tacit approval of the Primate of a Church which from the time of Wyclif had held the translation and reading of the Bible in the common tongue to be heresy and a crime punishable with the fire, Erasmus boldly avows his wish for a Bible open and intelligible to all. "I wish that even the weakest woman might read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. I wish that they were translated into all languages, so as to be read and understood not only by Scots and Irishmen, but even by Saracens and Turks. But the first step to their being read is to make them intelligible to the reader. I long for the day when the husbandman shall sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, when the weaver shall hum them to the time of his shuttle, when the traveller shall while away with their stories the weariness of his journey." The New Testament of Erasmus became the topic of the day; the Court, the Universities, every household to which the New Learning had penetrated, read and discussed it. But bold as its language may have seemed, Warham not only expressed his approbation, but lent the work—as he wrote to its author—"to bishop after bishop." The most influential of his suffragans, Bishop Fox of Winchester, declared that the mere version was worth ten commentaries: the most learned, Fisher of Rochester, entertained Erasmus at his house. 1509 to 1520

Daring and full of promise as were these efforts of the New Learning in the direction of educational and religious reform, its political and social speculations took a far wider range in the "Utopia" of Thomas More. Even in the household of Cardinal Morton, where he had spent his childhood, More's precocious ability had raised the highest hopes. "Whoever may live to see it," the grey-haired statesman used to say, "this boy now waiting at table will turn out a marvellous man." We have seen the spell which his wonderful learning and the sweetness of his temper threw at Oxford over Colet and Erasmus; and, young as he was, More no sooner quitted the University than he was known throughout Europe as one of the foremost figures in the new movement. The keen, irregular face, the grey restless eye, the thin mobile lips, the tumbled brown hair, the careless gait and dress, as they remain stamped on the canvas of Holbein, picture the inner soul of the man, his vivacity, his restless, all-devouring intellect, his keen and Thomas More

1509 to 1520

even reckless wit, the kindly, half-sad humour that drew its strange veil of laughter and tears over the deep, tender reverence of the soul within. In a higher, because in a sweeter and more loveable form than Colet, More is the representative of the religious tendency of the New Learning in England. The young law-student who laughed at the superstition and asceticism of the monks of his day wore a hair shirt next his skin, and schooled himself by penances for the cell he desired among the Carthusians. It was characteristic of the man that among all the gay, profligate scholars of the Italian Renascence he chose as the object of his admiration the disciple of Savonarola, Pico di Mirandola. Free-thinker as the bigots who listened to his daring speculations termed him, his eye would brighten and his tongue falter as he spoke with friends of heaven and the after-life. When he took office, it was with the open stipulation "first to look to God, and after God to the King." But in his outer bearing there was nothing of the monk or recluse. The brightness and freedom of the New Learning seemed incarnate in the young scholar, with his gay talk, his winsomeness of manner, his reckless epigrams, his passionate love of music, his omnivorous reading, his paradoxical speculations, his gibes at monks, his schoolboy fervour of liberty. But events were soon to prove that beneath this sunny nature lay a stern inflexibility of conscientious resolve. The Florentine scholars who penned declamations against tyrants had covered with their flatteries the tyranny of the house of Medici. More no sooner entered Parliament than his ready argument and keen sense of justice led to the rejection of the Royal demand for a heavy subsidy. "A beardless boy," said the courtiers,—and More was only twenty-six,—"has disappointed the King's purpose;" and during the rest of Henry the Seventh's reign the young lawyer was forced to withdraw from public life. But the withdrawal had little effect on his buoyant activity. He rose at once into repute at the bar. He published his "Life of Richard the Third," the first work in which what we may call modern English prose appears written with purity and clearness of style and a freedom either from antiquated forms of expression or classical pedantry. His ascetic dreams were replaced by the affections of home. It is when we get a glimpse of him in his house at Chelsea that we understand the endearing epithets which Erasmus always lavishes upon More. The delight of the young husband was to train the girl he had chosen for his wife in his own taste for letters and for music. The reserve which the age exacted from parents was thrown to the winds in More's intercourse with his children. He loved teaching them, and lured them to their deeper studies by the coins and curiosities he had gathered in his cabinet. He was as fond of their pets and their games as his children themselves, and would take grave scholars and statesmen into the garden to see his girls' rabbit-hutches or to watch the gambols of their favourite monkey. "I have given you kisses enough," he wrote to his little ones, in merry verse, when far away on political business, "but stripes

hardly ever." The accession of Henry the Eighth dragged him back into the political current. It was at his house that Erasmus penned the "Praise of Folly," and the work, in its Latin title, "Moriæ Encomium," embodied in playful fun his love of the extravagant humour of More. More "tried as hard to keep out of Court," says his descendant, "as most men try to get into it." When the charm of his conversation gave so much pleasure to the young sovereign "that he could not once in a month get leave to go home to his wife or children, whose company he much desired, . . . he began thereupon to dissemble his nature, and so, little by little, from his former mirth to dissemble himself." More shared to the full the disappointment of his friends at the sudden outbreak of Henry's warlike temper, but the Peace again drew him to the Court, he entered the Royal service, and was soon in the King's confidence both as a counsellor and as a diplomatist. 1509 to 1520

It was on one of his diplomatic missions that More describes himself as hearing news of the Kingdom of "Nowhere." "On a certain day when I had heard mass in Our Lady's Church, which is the fairest, the most gorgeous and curious church of building in all the city of Antwerp, and also most frequented of people, and service being over I was ready to go home to my lodgings, I chanced to espy my friend Peter Gilles talking with a certain stranger, a man well stricken in age, with a black sun-burnt face, a large beard, and a cloke cast trimly about his shoulders, whom by his favour and apparell forthwith I judged to be a mariner." The sailor turned out to have been a companion of Amerigo Vespucci in those voyages to the New World "that be now in print and abroad in every man's hand," and on More's invitation he accompanied him to his house, and "there in my garden upon a bench covered with green turves we sate down, talking together" of the man's marvellous adventures, his desertion in America by Vespucci, his wanderings over the country under the equinoctial line, and at last of his stay in the Kingdom of "Nowhere." It was the story of "Nowhere," or Utopia, which More embodied in the wonderful book which reveals to us the heart of the New Learning. As yet the movement had been one of scholars and divines. Its plans of reform had been almost exclusively intellectual and religious. But in More the same free play of thought which had shaken off the old forms of education and faith turned to question the old forms of society and politics. From a world where fifteen hundred years of Christian teaching had produced social injustice, religious intolerance, and political tyranny, the humorist philosopher turned to a "Nowhere," in which the mere efforts of natural human virtue realized those ends of security, equality, brotherhood, and freedom for which the very institution of society seemed to have been framed. It is as he wanders through this dreamland of the new reason that More touches the great problems which were fast opening before the modern world, problems of labour, of crime, of conscience, of government. Merely to have seen and to have The Utopia

1509 to 1520

examined questions such as these would prove the keenness of his intellect, but its far-reaching originality is shown in the solutions which he proposes. Amidst much that is the pure play of an exuberant fancy, much that is mere recollection of the dreams of bygone dreamers, we find again and again the most important social and political discoveries of later times anticipated by the genius of Thomas More. In some points, such as his treatment of the question of Labour, he still remains far in advance of current opinion. The whole system of society around him seemed to him "nothing but a conspiracy of the rich against the poor." Its economic legislation was simply the carrying out of such a conspiracy by process of law. "The rich are ever striving to pare away something further from the daily wages of the poor by private fraud and even by public law, so that the wrong already existing (for it is a wrong that those from whom the State derives most benefit should receive least reward) is made yet greater by means of the law of the State." "The rich devise every means by which they may in the first place secure to themselves what they have amassed by wrong, and then take to their own use and profit at the lowest possible price the work and labour of the poor. And so soon as the rich decide on adopting these devices in the name of the public, then they become law." The result was the wretched existence to which the labour-class was doomed, "a life so wretched that even a beast's life seems enviable." No such cry of pity for the poor, of protest against the system of agrarian and manufacturing tyranny which found its expression in the Statutes of Labourers, had been heard since the days of Piers Ploughman. But from Christendom More turns with a smile to "Nowhere." In "Nowhere" the aim of legislation is to secure the welfare, social, industrial, intellectual, religious, of the community at large, and of the labour-class as the true basis of a well-ordered commonwealth. The end of its labour-laws was simply the welfare of the labourer. Goods were possessed indeed in common, but labour was compulsory with all. The period of toil was shortened to the nine hours demanded by modern artisans, with a view to the intellectual improvement of the worker. "In the institution of the weal public this end is only and chiefly pretended and minded that what time may possibly be spared from the necessary occupations and affairs of the commonwealth, all that the citizens should withdraw from bodily service, to the free liberty of the mind and garnishing of the same. For herein they conceive the felicity of this life to consist." A public system of education enabled the Utopians to avail themselves of their leisure. While in England half of the population "could read no English," every child was well taught in "Nowhere." The physical aspects of society were cared for as attentively as its moral. The houses of Utopia "in the beginning were very low and like homely cottages or poor shepherd huts made at all adventures of every rude piece of timber that came first to hand, with mud walls, and ridged roofs thatched over with straw."

The picture was really that of the common English town of More's day, the home of squalor and pestilence. In Utopia, however, they had at last come to realize the connection between public morality and the health which springs from light, air, comfort, and cleanliness. "The streets were twenty feet broad; the houses backed by spacious gardens, and, curiously builded after a gorgeous and gallant sort, with their stories one after another. The outsides of the walls be made either of hard flint, or of plaster, or else of brick; and the inner sides be well strengthened by timber work. The roofs be plain and flat, covered over with plaster so tempered that no fire can hurt or perish it, and withstanding the violence of the weather better than any lead. They keep the wind out of their windows with glass, for it is there much used, and sometimes also with fine linen cloth dipped in oil or amber, and that for two commodities, for by this means more light cometh in and the wind is better kept out." 1509 to 1520

The same foresight which appears in More's treatment of the questions of Labour and the Public Health is yet more apparent in his treatment of the question of Crime. He was the first to suggest that punishment was less effective in suppressing it than prevention. "If you allow your people to be badly taught, their morals to be corrupted from childhood, and then when they are men punish them for the very crimes to which they have been trained in childhood—what is this but first to make thieves, and then to punish them?" He was the first to plead for proportion between the punishment and the crime, and to point out the folly of the cruel penalties of his day. "Simple theft is not so great an offence as to be punished with death." If a thief and a murderer are sure of the same penalty, he points out that the law is simply tempting the thief to secure his theft by murder. "While we go about to make thieves afraid, we are really provoking them to kill good men." The end of all punishment he declares to be reformation, "nothing else but the destruction of vice and the saving of men." He advises "so using and ordering criminals that they cannot choose but be good; and what harm soever they did before, the residue of their lives to make amends for the same." Above all, he urges that to be remedial punishment must be wrought out by labour and hope, so that "none is hopeless or in despair to recover again his former state of freedom by giving good tokens and likelihood of himself that he will ever after that live a true and honest man." It is not too much to say that in the great principles More lays down he anticipated every one of the improvements in our criminal system which have distinguished the last hundred years. His treatment of the religious question was even more in advance of his age. If the houses of Utopia were strangely in contrast with the halls of England, where the bones from every dinner lay rotting in the dirty straw which strewed the floor, where the smoke curled about the rafters, and the wind whistled through the unglazed windows; if its penal legislation had little likeness

1503 to 1530

to the gallows which stood out so frequently against our English sky; the religion of "Nowhere" was in yet stronger conflict with the faith of Christendom. It rested simply on nature and reason. It held that God's design was the happiness of man, and that the ascetic rejection of human delights, save for the common good, was thanklessness to the Giver. Christianity, indeed, had already reached Utopia, but it had few priests; religion found its centre rather in the family than in the congregation: and each household confessed its faults to its own natural head. A yet stranger characteristic was seen in the peaceable way in which it lived side by side with the older religions. More than a century before William of Orange, More discerned and proclaimed the great principle of religious toleration. In "Nowhere" it was lawful to every man to be of what religion he would. Even the disbelievers in a Divine Being or in the immortality of man, who by a single exception to its perfect religious indifference were excluded from public office, were excluded, not on the ground of their religious belief, but because their opinions were believed to be degrading to mankind, and therefore to incapacitate those who held them from governing in a noble temper. But even these were subject to no punishment, because the people of Utopia were "persuaded that it is not in a man's power to believe what he list." The religion which a man held he might propagate by argument, though not by violence or insult to the religion of others. But while each sect performed its rites in private, all assembled for public worship in a spacious temple, where the vast throng, clad in white, and grouped round a priest clothed in fair raiment wrought marvellously out of birds' plumage, joined in hymns and prayers so framed as to be acceptable to all. The importance of this public devotion lay in the evidence it afforded that liberty of conscience could be combined with religious unity.

The estimate of Henry VII. in the text should be compared with that in Busch, "England under the Tudors." The foreign policy of the two reigns may be studied in that work and in Pollard's "Henry VIII."

Section V.—Wolsey, 1515—1531

1515 to 1531

[*Authorities.*—The most important sources are the State Papers (Record Commission), and the Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic (edited Brewer, Gairdner, and Brodie). The chief Chronicle for this period is that of Hall (edited Whibley). Among modern works Brewer's introduction to the Letters and Papers supplies a detailed account of Wolsey's policy; his views should be compared with those of Pollard, "Henry VIII.," and Fisher, "Political History of England, 1485-1547." Cavendish, "Life of Wolsey," is a panegyric by an admiring dependant. Friedmann, "Anne Boleyn," is the most important modern work on the divorce question.]

The New Learning and the Reformation

"There are many things in the commonwealth of Nowhere, which I rather wish than hope to see adopted in our own." It was with these words of characteristic irony that More closed the great work which embodied the dreams of the New Learning. Destined as they were to fulfilment in the course of ages, its schemes of social, religious, and political reform broke helplessly against the temper of the time. At the very moment when More was pleading the cause of justice between rich and poor, the agrarian discontent was being fanned by exactions into a fiercer flame. While he aimed sarcasm after sarcasm against King-worship, despotism was being organized into a system. His advocacy of the two principles of religious toleration and Christian comprehension coincides almost to a year with the opening of the strife between the Reformation and the Papacy.

1517 "That Luther has a fine genius," laughed Leo the Tenth, when he heard that a German Professor had nailed some Propositions denouncing the abuse of Indulgences, or of the Papal power to remit certain penalties attached to the commission of sins, against the doors of the church at Wittenberg. But the "Quarrell of Friars," as the controversy was termed contemptuously at Rome, soon took larger proportions. If at the outset Luther flung himself 1518 "prostrate at the feet" of the Papacy, and owned its voice as the voice of Christ, the formal sentence of Leo no sooner confirmed the doctrine of Indulgences than their opponent appealed to a future Council of the Church. Two years later the rupture was complete. A Papal Bull formally condemned the errors of the Reformer. The condemnation was met with defiance, and Luther 1520 publicly consigned the Bull to the flames. A second condemnation expelled him from the bosom of the Church, and the ban of the Empire was soon added to that of the Papacy. "Here stand I; I can none other," Luther replied to the young Emperor, Charles the Fifth, as he pressed him to recant in the Diet of Worms; and from the hiding-place in the Thuringian Forest where he was sheltered by the Elector of Saxony he denounced not merely, as at first, the abuses of the Papacy, but the Papacy itself. The heresies of Wyclif were revived; the infallibility, the authority of the 1521 Roman See, the truth of its doctrines, the efficacy of its worship,

1515 to 1531 were denied and scoffed at in the vigorous pamphlets which issued from his retreat, and were dispersed throughout the world by the new printing-press. The old resentment of Germany against the oppression of Rome, the moral revolt in its more religious minds against the secularity and corruption of the Church, the disgust of the New Learning at its superstition and ignorance, combined to secure for Luther a wide-spread popularity and the protection of the northern princes of the Empire. In England however his protest found as yet no echo: its only effect indeed was to rouse again the old spirit of persecution. Luther's works were solemnly burnt in St. Paul's, heretical publications were ordered to be delivered up, and fresh orders were issued for the prosecution of heretics in the Bishops' Courts. The young King himself, proud of a theological knowledge in which he stood alone among the sovereigns of Europe, entered the lists against Luther with an "Assertion of the Seven Sacraments," for which he was rewarded by Leo with
1521 the title of "Defender of the Faith." The insolent abuse of the Reformer's answer called More and Fisher into the field. As yet the New Learning, though scared by Luther's intemperate language, had steadily backed him in his struggle. Erasmus pleaded for him with the Emperor; Ulrich von Hutten attacked the friars in satires and invectives as violent as his own. But the temper of the Revival was even more antagonistic to the temper of Luther than that of Rome itself. From the golden dream of a new age, wrought peaceably and purely by the slow progress of intelligence, the growth of letters, the development of human virtue, the Reformer of Wittenberg turned away with horror. He had little or no sympathy with the new culture. He despised reason as heartily as any Papal dogmatist could despise it. He hated the very thought of toleration or comprehension. He had been driven by a moral and intellectual compulsion to declare the Roman system a false one, but it was only to replace it by another system of doctrine just as elaborate, and claiming precisely the same infallibility. To degrade human nature was to attack the very base of the New Learning; but Erasmus no sooner advanced to its defence than Luther declared man to be utterly enslaved by original sin and incapable through any efforts of his own of discovering truth or of arriving at goodness. Such a doctrine not only annihilated the piety and wisdom of the classic past, from which the New Learning had drawn its larger views of life and of the world; it trampled in the dust reason itself, the very instrument by which More and Erasmus hoped to regenerate both knowledge and religion. To More especially, with his keener perception of its future effect, this sudden revival of a purely theological and dogmatic spirit, severing Christendom into warring camps, and annihilating all hopes of union and tolerance, was especially hateful. The temper which hitherto had seemed so "endearing, gentle, and happy," suddenly gave way. His reply to Luther's attack upon the King sank to the level of the work it answered. That of Fisher was

calmer and more argumentative; but the divorce of the New Learning from the Reformation was complete. 1515 to 1531

Nor were the political hopes of the "Utopia" destined to be realized by the minister who at the close of Henry's early war with France mounted rapidly into power. Thomas Wolsey, the son of a wealthy townsman of Ipswich, who had risen to the post of Royal Chaplain, was taken by Bishop Fox, at the death of Henry the Seventh, into the political service of the crown. His extraordinary abilities hardly perhaps required the songs, dances, and carouses with his indulgence in which he was taunted by his enemies, to aid him in winning the favour of the young sovereign. From the post of favourite he soon rose to that of minister. Henry's resentment at Ferdinand's perfidy and at the ridiculous results of the vast efforts and expense of the war against France broke the Spanish alliance to which his father and the ministers whom his father had left him so steadily clung. The retirement of Fox made way for Wolsey, and the policy of the new statesman reversed that of his predecessors. It was the friendship of England which encouraged Francis the First to attempt the reconquest of Lombardy, and even his victory of Marignano failed to rouse a jealousy of French aggression, though by treaties and subsidies to its opponents Wolsey managed to limit the conquests of France to the Milanese. A French alliance meant simply a policy of peace, and the administration of Wolsey amidst all its ceaseless diplomacy aimed steadily at keeping England out of war. The Peace, as we have seen, restored the hopes of the New Learning; it enabled Colet to reform education, Erasmus to undertake the regeneration of the Church, More to set on foot a new science of Politics. But peace as Wolsey used it was fatal to English freedom. In the political hints which lie scattered over the "Utopia" More notes with bitter irony the advance of the new despotism. It was only in "Nowhere" that a sovereign was "removable on suspicion of a design to enslave his people." In England the work of slavery was being quietly wrought, hints the great lawyer, through the law. "There will never be wanting some pretence for deciding in the King's favour; as, that equity is on his side, or the strict letter of the law, or some forced interpretation of it; or if none of these, that the Royal prerogative ought with conscientious judges to outweigh all other considerations." We are startled at the precision with which More maps out the expedients by which the law courts were to lend themselves to the advance of tyranny till their crowning judgment in the case of Ship-money. But behind these judicial expedients lay great principles of absolutism, which partly from the example of foreign monarchies, partly from the sense of social and political insecurity, and yet more from the isolated position of the Crown, were gradually winning their way in public opinion. "These notions," he goes boldly on, "are fostered by the maxim that the King can do no wrong, however much he may wish to do it; that not only the property but the persons of his

Wolsey

1515

1515 to 1531

subjects are his own; and that a man has a right to no more than the King's goodness thinks fit not to take from him." In the hands of Wolsey these maxims were transformed into principles of State. The check which had been imposed on the Royal power by the presence of great prelates and nobles at the Council was practically removed. All authority was concentrated in the hands of a single minister. The whole direction of home and foreign affairs rested with Wolsey alone; as Chancellor he stood at the head of public justice; his elevation to the office of Legate rendered him supreme in the Church. Enormous as was the mass of work which he undertook, it was thoroughly done: his administration of the Royal treasury was economical; the number of his despatches is hardly less remarkable than the care bestowed upon each; as Chancellor even More—his avowed enemy—confesses that he surpassed all men's expectations. The Court of Chancery, indeed, became so crowded with business through the character for expedition and justice which it acquired under his rule, that subordinate courts—one of which, that of the Master of the Rolls, still remains—had to be created for its relief. It was this vast concentration of all secular and ecclesiastical power in a single hand which accustomed England to the personal government which began with Henry the Eighth; and it was, above all, Wolsey's long tenure of the whole Papal authority within the realm, and the consequent suspension of appeals to Rome, that led men to acquiesce at a later time in Henry's religious supremacy. For great as was Wolsey's pride, he regarded himself and proclaimed himself simply as the creature of the King. Henry had munificently rewarded his services to the crown. He had been raised to the See of Lincoln and the Archbishopric of York, the revenues of two other Sees whose tenants were foreigners were in his hands, he was Bishop of Winchester and Abbot of St. Albans, he was in receipt of pensions from France and Spain, while his official emoluments were enormous. His ambition was glutted at last with the rank of Cardinal. His pomp was almost royal. A train of prelates and nobles followed him wherever he moved; his household was composed of five hundred persons of noble birth, and its chief posts were held by knights and barons of the realm. He spent his vast wealth with princely ostentation. Two of his houses, Hampton Court and York House (under its name of Whitehall), were splendid enough to serve at his fall for Royal palaces. His school at Ipswich was eclipsed by the glories of his foundation at Oxford, whose name of Cardinal College has been lost in its later title of Christ Church. But all this mass of power and wealth Wolsey held, and owned that he held, simply at the Royal will. In raising his favourite to the head of Church and of State Henry was simply gathering all religious as well as all civil authority into his personal grasp. The nation which trembled before Wolsey learned to tremble before the King who could destroy Wolsey by a breath.

That Henry's will was supreme in the State was proved by his

rough repudiation, after nine years of peace, of the policy on which all the Cardinal's plans of administration were based. The Spanish cause was popular among the English nobility, and it was resolutely advocated by the Duke of Buckingham, who stood at their head. Wolsey met the Duke's opposition with a charge of treason, to which the fact of his descent from Edward the Third gave a fatal weight. Buckingham had sworn that in the event of Henry's ceasing to live he would bring the Cardinal's head to the block, and the boast was tortured into the crime of imagining the king's death. The peers were forced to doom the chief of their order to a traitor's punishment; but the Queen, Catherine of Arragon, still upheld the partisans of Spain, and Henry was himself weary of a policy of peace. Disappointed in his hopes of attaining the Imperial crown on the death of Maximilian, he ceased to believe Wolsey's flattering assurances that in the balanced contest between Spain and France he was the arbiter of Europe; while the dream of "recovering his French inheritance," which he had never really abandoned, was carefully fed by his nephew Charles, who had inherited Flanders as heir to the Dukes of Burgundy, Austria as heir to Maximilian, and Castile as the son of Juana, had mounted the throne of Arragon on the death of his grandfather, Ferdinand, and by his election as Emperor had become in his earliest manhood the mightiest power in Christendom. It was in vain that Francis strove to retain Henry's friendship by an interview near Guisnes, to which the profuse expenditure of both monarchs gave the name of the Field of Cloth of Gold; in vain that Wolsey endeavoured to avert the struggle by conferences, and to delay the visit of Charles to England. The meeting of the Emperor with Henry at Southampton gave the signal for a renewal of the war. Henry was fascinated by the persuasions and promises of his young nephew, and the French alliance came to an end. In the first result of the new war policy at home we can see the reason for Wolsey's passionate adherence to a policy of peace. With the instinct of despotism he had seen that the real danger which menaced the New Monarchy lay in the tradition of the English Parliament; and though Henry had thrice called together the Houses to supply the expenses of his earlier struggle with France, Wolsey governed during eight years of peace without once assembling them. The ordinary resources of the Crown, however, were inadequate to meet the expenses of war, but so strong was Wolsey's antipathy to Parliaments that he resorted to a measure of arbitrary taxation whose success would have rendered it needless ever to convoke Parliament again. A forced loan was assessed upon the whole kingdom. Twenty thousand pounds were exacted from London; and its wealthier citizens were summoned before the Cardinal and required to give an account of the value of their estates. Commissioners were despatched into every county for the purpose of assessment, and precepts were issued on their information, requiring in some cases supplies of soldiers, in others a tenth of a man's annual income,

1515 to 1531 — Wolsey and the Parliament

1519

1523

1532

1515 to 1531 1523 1525

for the King's service. So poor, however, was the return that in the following year Wolsey was forced to summon Parliament and lay before it the unprecedented demand of a property-tax of twenty per cent. The demand was made by the Cardinal in person, but he was received with obstinate silence. It was in vain that Wolsey called on member after member to speak; and his appeal to More, who had been elected to the chair of the House of Commons, was met by the Speaker's falling on his knees and representing his powerlessness to reply till he had received instructions from the House itself. The effort to overawe the Commons failed, and Wolsey no sooner withdrew than an angry debate began. He again returned to answer the objections which had been raised, and again the Commons foiled the unconstitutional attempt to influence their deliberations by refusing to discuss the matter in his presence. The struggle continued for a fortnight; and though successful in procuring a subsidy, the Court party were forced to content themselves with less than half Wolsey's demand. His anger at this burst of sturdy independence flung back the Cardinal on the system of Benevolences. A tenth was demanded from the laity, and a fourth from the clergy in every county by the Royal Commissioners. There was "sore grudging and murmuring"—Warham wrote to the Court—"among the people." "If men should give their goods by a commission," said the Kentish squires, "then it would be worse than the taxes of France, and England should be bond not free." The keen political instinct of the nation already discerned that in the question of self-taxation was involved that of the very existence of freedom. The clergy put themselves in the forefront of the resistance, and preached from every pulpit that the commission was contrary to the liberties of the realm, and that the King could take no man's goods but by process of law. So stirred was the nation that Wolsey bent to the storm, and offered to rely on the voluntary benevolences of each subject. But the Act which declared all Benevolences illegal was recalled to memory, and the demand was evaded by London, while the Commissioners were driven out of Kent. A revolt, indeed, which broke out in Suffolk was only prevented from spreading by the unconditional withdrawal of the Royal demand.

The Agrarian Discontent

Wolsey's defeat saved English freedom for the moment; but the danger from which he shrank was not merely that of a conflict with the sense of liberty. The murmurs of the Kentish squires only swelled the ever-deepening voice of public discontent. If the condition of the land question in the end gave strength to the Crown by making it the security for public order, it became a terrible peril at every crisis of conflict between the monarchy and the landowners. The steady rise in the price of wool was at this period giving a fresh impulse to the agrarian changes which had been going steadily on for the last hundred years, to the throwing together of the smaller holdings, and the introduction of sheep-farming on an enormous scale. The merchant classes, too, whose

prosperity we have already noticed, were investing largely in land, and these "farming gentlemen and clerking knights," as Latimer bitterly styled them, were restrained by few traditions or associations in their eviction of the smaller tenants. The land, indeed, had been greatly underlet; "that which went heretofore for twenty or forty pounds a year," we learn from the same source, "now is let for fifty or a hundred;" and the new purchasers were quick in making profit by a general rise in rents. It had been only by the low scale of rent, indeed, that the small yeomanry class had been enabled to exist. "My father," says Latimer, "was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own; only he had a farm of three or four pounds by the year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half-a-dozen men. He had walk for a hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine; he was able and did find the King a harness with himself and his horse while he came to the place that he should receive the King's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went to Blackheath Field. He kept me to school: he married my sisters with five pounds apiece, so that he brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor, and all this he did of the same farm, where he that now hath it payeth sixteen pounds by year or more, and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, or give a cup of drink to the poor." The bitterness of ejection was increased by the iniquitous means which were often employed to bring it about. The farmers, if we believe More, were "got rid of either by fraud or force, or tired out with repeated wrongs into parting with their property." "In this way it comes to pass that these poor wretches, men, women, husbands, orphans, widows, parents with little children, households greater in number than in wealth (for arable farming requires many hands, while one shepherd and herdsman will suffice for a pasture farm), all these emigrate from their native fields without knowing where to go." The sale of their scanty household stuff drove them to wander homeless abroad, to be thrown into prison as vagabonds, to beg and to steal. Yet in the face of such a spectacle as this we still find the old complaint of scarcity of labour, and the old legal remedy for it in a fixed scale of wages. The social disorder, in fact, baffled Wolsey's sagacity, and he could find no better remedy for it than laws against the further extension of sheep-farms, and a terrible increase of public executions. Both were alike fruitless. Enclosures and evictions went on as before. "If you do not remedy the evils which produce thieves," More urged with bitter truth, "the rigorous execution of justice in punishing thieves will be vain." But even More could only suggest a remedy which, efficacious as it was subsequently to prove, had yet to wait a century for its realization. "Let the woollen manufacture be introduced, so that honest employment may be found for those whom want has made thieves, or will make thieves ere long." The mass of

1515 to 1531

1515 to 1531 social disorder grew steadily greater; while the break up of the great military households of the nobles which was still going on, and the return of wounded and disabled soldiers from the wars, introduced a yet more dangerous leaven of outrage and crime.

The Divorce

This public discontent, as well as the exhaustion of the treasury, added bitterness to the miserable result of the war. To France, indeed, the struggle had been disastrous, for the loss of the Milanese and the capture of Francis the First in the defeat of Pavia laid her at the feet of the Emperor. But England, as before, gained nothing from two useless campaigns, and in the heat of Henry's disappointment Wolsey found it possible again to negotiate a peace. Falling back on his old policy, he drew closer the French alliance and gave a cautious support to Francis; while he carefully abstained from any part in the fresh war which broke out on the refusal of the French monarch to fulfil the terms by which he had purchased his release. But the Cardinal's mind was already dwelling on a step by which he hoped to make any new return to the Spanish policy impossible. As a princess of Spain, and aunt to the Emperor, the Queen, Catherine of Arragon, stood at the head of the Spanish party; and Wolsey bitterly resented the part she had taken in the recent breach with France. But the death of child after child, and the want of a son, had already roused a superstitious dread in Henry's mind that his marriage with a brother's widow, though sanctioned by the Church, was marked with the curse of Heaven. In the King's dread, Wolsey saw the opportunity of sowing a deadly quarrel between England and Spain. From whatever quarter the notion of a divorce was first suggested to Henry, it was at once supported by the Cardinal. It was probably at his suggestion that doubts were expressed as to the validity of the King's marriage and on the legitimacy of its issue, the Lady Mary, by the French negotiators of the treaty of alliance. Wolsey was looking forward, not only to a breach with the Emperor, but to the supplying Catherine's place with a princess of France. But the desires of Henry outran the policy of his minister. His conscientious scruples were suddenly quickened by the charms of Anne Boleyn, a young lady of his Court; and this passion, neglected and despised by Wolsey as a mere intrigue of gallantry, was skilfully fanned by the gay beauty and dexterous reserve of Anne herself, as well as by the support of the Duke of Norfolk, with whose family her own was connected. At a moment when no communication had as yet been made to the world of his desire for a divorce, nor any application laid before the Pope for the annulling of his former marriage, Henry suddenly announced to the Cardinal his resolve on the new union. The remonstrances which Wolsey offered on his knees were only atoned for by his promise of fresh zeal in the cause of the divorce. But the matter was no sooner divulged than its difficulties became manifest. In the Royal Council itself it received small support. The most learned of the English bishops, Fisher of Rochester, declared openly against it.

1525

1527

The English theologians, who were consulted on the validity of the Papal dispensation which had allowed Henry's marriage to take place, referred the King to the Pope for a decision of the question. The commercial classes shrank from a step which involved an irretrievable breach with the Emperor, who was master of their great market in Flanders. Above all, the iniquity of the proposal jarred against the public conscience. But neither danger nor shame availed against the King's wilfulness and passion. Wolsey's suggestions of caution met only with reproaches, and Henry's confidence was fatally lost as the Cardinal became suspected of covert opposition to his favourite project. Norfolk and Anne Boleyn's father, created at a later time Lord Rochford, who gained more and more the upper hand in the Council, pushed the divorce resolutely on. It was in vain that Clement the Seventh, perplexed at once by his wish to gratify Henry, his own conscientious doubts as to the possibility of the course proposed, and his terror of the Emperor, whose power was now predominant in Italy, suggested that the King should act on his own responsibility. Henry was resolute in demanding a legal declaration of the invalidity of the Papal bull on which his first marriage rested, and the Pope was forced at last to issue a commission to the Cardinals Wolsey and Campeggio for a trial of the facts on which the King's application was based. Months, however, passed in negotiations for the purpose of evading such an issue. The Cardinals pressed on Catherine the expediency of her withdrawal to a religious house, while Henry pressed on the Pope that of a settlement of the matter by his formal declaration against the validity of the marriage. It was not till both efforts had failed that the Court met at the Blackfriars. The Queen, who saw in Wolsey her enemy rather than a judge, only appeared to offer an appeal to Clement; and on the refusal of the Cardinals to admit it she flung herself at Henry's feet. "Sire," said Catherine, "I beseech you to pity me, a woman and a stranger, without an assured friend and without an indifferent counsellor. I take God to witness that I have always been to you a true and loyal wife, that I have made it my constant duty to seek your pleasure, that I have loved all whom you loved, whether I have reason or not, whether they are friends to me or foes. I have been your wife for years, I have brought you many children. God knows that when I came to your bed I was a virgin, and I put it to your own conscience to say whether it was not so. If there be any offence which can be alleged against me I consent to depart with infamy: if not, then I pray you to do me justice." The piteous appeal was wasted on a King who was already entertaining Anne Boleyn with royal state in his own palace. The case proceeded; but Clement, who was now wholly in the Emperor's hands, had already cited it before him at Rome; and the Cardinals, though as yet ignorant of the Pope's decision, decided on an adjournment for the purpose of consulting him as to the judgment they should pronounce.

1515 to 1531

1515 to 1531 — The Fall of Wolsey

"Never did Cardinal bring good to England," exclaimed Wolsey's bitter enemy, the Duke of Suffolk, as the court adjourned. "Of all men living," Wolsey boldly retorted, "you, my lord Duke, have the least reason to dispraise Cardinals, for if I, a poor Cardinal, had not been, you would not now have had a head on your shoulders wherewith to make such a brag in disrepute of us." But both the Cardinal and his enemies knew that the minister's doom was sealed. Henry, who had throughout suspected him of being no friend to his project, was furious at the sudden scruples of conscience which frustrated his will. Wolsey was at once banished from the Court, and a promise was extorted from her royal lover by Anne Boleyn to see him no more. The Duke of Norfolk, who took his place at the Council board, was not only the head of her own party but the chief opponent of the French alliance; and his belief that the divorce had been hindered only by the ill-will of the Emperor to Wolsey induced Henry to draw nearer again to Spain, and to seek to obtain his object by negotiation with Charles himself. But the utter ruin of the discarded minister was necessary for the success of the new policy, and the Cardinal was at once prosecuted for a transgression of the Statute of Præmunire by holding his Court as Legate within the realm. Wolsey was prostrated by the blow. He offered to give up everything he possessed if the King would but cease from his displeasure. "His face," wrote the French ambassador, "is dwindled to half its natural size. In truth, his misery is such that his enemies, Englishmen as they are, cannot help pitying him." Office and wealth were flung desperately at the King's feet, and for a time ruin seemed averted. A thousand boats full of London citizens covered the Thames to see the Cardinal's barge pass to the Tower, but he was permitted to retire to Esher, and Henry for the moment seemed content with his disgrace. Pardon was granted him on the surrender of his vast possessions to the Crown, and he was ordered to proceed at once to his Archbishopric, the one dignity he was suffered to retain.

1530 But hardly a year had passed before his popularity in the north revived the jealousy of his political rivals, and on the eve of his installation-feast he was arrested on a charge of high treason, and conducted by the Lieutenant of the Tower towards London. Already broken by his enormous labours, by internal disease, and the sense of his fall, the old man accepted the arrest as a sentence of death. An attack of dysentery forced him to rest at the Abbey of Leicester, and as he reached the gate he said feebly to the brethren who met him, "I am come to lay my bones among you." On his death-bed his thoughts still clung to the prince whom he had served. "He is a Prince," said the dying man to the Lieutenant of the Tower, "of a most royal courage: sooner than miss any part of his will, he will endanger one half of his kingdom: and I do assure you I have often kneeled before him, sometimes for three hours together, to persuade him from his appetite, and could not prevail. And, Master Knygton, had I but served God as diligently

as I have served the King, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs. But this is my due reward for my pains and study, not regarding my service to God, but only my duty to my prince." No words could paint with so terrible a truthfulness the spirit of the New Monarchy, which Wolsey had done more than any of those who went before him to raise into an overwhelming despotism. All sense of loyalty to England, to its freedom, to its institutions, had utterly passed away. The one duty which fills the statesman's mind is a duty "to his prince," a prince whose personal will and appetite was overriding the highest interests of the State, trampling under foot the wisest councils, and crushing with the blind ingratitude of a Fate the servants who opposed him. But even Wolsey, while he recoiled from the monstrous form which he had created, could hardly have dreamed of the work of destruction which the royal courage, and yet more royal appetite, of his master was to accomplish in the years to come. 1515 to 1531

Section VI.—Thomas Cromwell, 1530—1540

[*Authorities.*—The State Papers and the Letters and Papers are the chief sources; compare also Wright, "Suppression of the Monasteries" (Camden Society), and Foxe, "Acts and Monuments," the so-called Book of Martyrs. The last is so violently Protestant in standpoint that it has been, perhaps, somewhat underestimated. Among modern works, Froude, "History of England," is pre-eminent, despite the strongly Protestant bias of the author and his hero-worship of Henry VIII. Gasquet, "Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries," gives the Roman Catholic view of the dissolution of the monasteries; other works on the religious side of the period are Dixon, "History of the Church of England," and Gairdner, "The English Church in the Sixteenth Century." Burnet, "History of the Reformation," contains many original documents. For Cromwell, Cranmer, etc., see their biographies in the "Dictionary of National Biography."]

Thomas Cromwell

The ten years which follow the fall of Wolsey are among the most momentous in our history. The New Monarchy at last realized its power, and the work for which Wolsey had paved the way was carried out with a terrible thoroughness. The one great institution which could still offer resistance to the Royal will was struck down. The Church became a mere instrument of the central despotism. The people learned their helplessness in rebellions easily suppressed and avenged with ruthless severity. A reign of terror, organized with consummate and merciless skill, held England panic-stricken at Henry's feet. The noblest heads rolled on the block. Virtue and learning could not save Thomas More: royal descent could not save Lady Salisbury. The execution of queen after queen taught England that nothing was too high for Henry's "courage," or too sacred for his "appetite." Parliament assembled only to sanction acts of unscrupulous tyranny, or to build up by its own statutes the great fabric of absolute rule. All the constitu-

1530 to 1540 tional safeguards of English freedom were swept away. Arbitrary taxation, arbitrary legislation, arbitrary imprisonment were powers claimed without dispute and unsparingly exercised by the Crown.

The history of this great revolution, for it is nothing less, is the history of a single man. In the whole line of English statesmen there is no one of whom we would willingly know so much, no one of whom we really know so little, as of Thomas Cromwell. When he meets us in Henry's service he is already past middle life; and during his earlier years it is hardly possible to do more than disentangle a few fragmentary facts from the mass of fable which gathered round them. His youth was one of roving adventure; whether he was the son of a poor blacksmith at Putney or no, he could hardly have been more than a boy when he was engaged in the service of the Marchioness of Dorset. He must still have been young when he took part as a common soldier in the wars of Italy, a "ruffian," as he owned afterwards to Cranmer, in the most unscrupulous school the world contained. But it was a school in which he learned lessons even more dangerous than those of the camp. He not only mastered the Italian language, but drank in the manners and tone of the Italy around him, the Italy of the Borgias and the Medici. It was with Italian versatility that he turned from the camp to the counting-house; he was certainly engaged as the commercial agent to one of the Venetian merchants; tradition finds him as a clerk at Antwerp, and history at last encounters him as a thriving wool merchant at Middleborough a few
1512 years after the opening of Henry's reign. By adding the trade of scrivener, something between that of a banker and attorney, to his other occupations, as well as by advancing money to the poorer nobles, Cromwell continued to amass wealth as years went on;
1528 and on the outbreak of the second war with France we find him a busy and influential member of the Commons in Parliament. Five years later the aim of his ambition was declared by his entrance into Wolsey's service. The Cardinal needed a man of business for the suppression of some smaller monasteries which he had undertaken, and for the transfer of their revenues to his foundations at Oxford and Ipswich. The task was an unpopular one, and it was carried out with a rough indifference to the feelings it aroused which involved Cromwell in the hate which was gathering round his master. But his wonderful self-reliance and sense of power only broke upon the world at Wolsey's fall. Of the hundreds of dependents who waited on the Cardinal's nod, Cromwell was the only one who clung faithfully to him at the last. In the lonely hours of his disgrace at Esher, Wolsey "made his moan unto Master Cromwell, who comforted him the best he could, and desired my Lord to give him leave to go to London, where he would make or mar, which was always his common saying." The next day saw him admitted to Henry's service, but still vigorous in his exertions to save the Cardinal. It was to Cromwell's efforts in

Parliament that Wolsey owed his escape from impeachment, and it was by him that the negotiations were conducted which permitted the fallen minister to retire to York. A general esteem seems to have rewarded this rare instance of fidelity to a ruined patron. "For his honest behaviour in his master's cause he was esteemed the most faithfullest servant, and was of all men greatly commended." But Henry's protection rested on other grounds. The ride to London had ended in a private interview with the King, in which Cromwell boldly advised him to cut the knot of the divorce by the simple exercise of his own Supremacy. The advice struck the key-note of the later policy by which the daring counsellor was to change the whole face of Church and State, but Henry still clung to the hopes held out by his new ministers, and shrunk perhaps as yet from the bare absolutism to which Cromwell called him. The advice at any rate was concealed, and, though high in the King's favour, his new servant waited patiently the progress of events. 1530 to 1540

For success in procuring the divorce Norfolk relied not only on the alliance and aid of the Emperor, but on the moral support which the project was expected to receive from the Parliament. The reassembling of the two Houses marked the close of the system of Wolsey. It was a step in fact which we can hardly err in attributing to the influence of the adherents whom Norfolk found in the party of the New Learning. To them, as to his mere political adversaries, the Cardinal's fall opened a prospect of better things. The dream of More in accepting the office of Chancellor, if we may judge it from the acts of his brief ministry, seems to have been that of carrying out the religious reformation which had been demanded by Colet and Erasmus, while checking the spirit of revolt against the unity of the Church. His severities against the Protestants, exaggerated as they have been by polemic rancour, remain the one stain on a memory that knows no other. But it was only by a rigid severance of the cause of reform, from what seemed to him the cause of revolution, that More probably hoped for a successful issue to the projects he laid before Parliament. The Petition of the Commons sounded like an echo of Colet's famous address to the Convocation. It attributed the growth of heresy not more to "frantic and seditious books published in the English tongue contrary to the very true Catholic and Christian faith" than to "the extreme and uncharitable behaviour of divers ordinaries." It remonstrated against the legislation of the clergy in Convocation without the King's assent or that of his subjects, the oppressive procedure of the Church Courts, the abuses of ecclesiastical patronage, and the excessive number of holydays. Henry referred the Petition to the bishops, but their only reply was a refusal of redress. The new ministry persisted, however, in pushing through the Commons their bills for ecclesiastical reform. The questions of Convocation and the Bishops' Courts were adjourned for further consideration, but the fees of the Courts Norfolk and More

1530 to 1540

were curtailed, the clergy restricted from lay employments, pluralities restrained, and residence enforced. In spite of a dogged opposition from the bishops the bills received the assent of the House of Lords, "to the great rejoicing of lay people, and the great displeasure of spiritual persons." The importance of the new measures lay really in the action of Parliament. They were an explicit announcement that church-reform was now to be undertaken, not by the clergy, but by the people at large. On the other hand, it was clear that it would be carried out, not in a spirit of hostility, but of loyalty to the Church. The Commons forced from Bishop Fisher an apology for words which were taken as a doubt thrown on their orthodoxy. If Henry forbade the circulation of a translation of the Bible executed by Tyndale in a Protestant spirit, he carefully promised a more correct version. More devoted himself to the task of crushing by a strict execution of the laws the hopes raised in the minds of the sectaries by the fall of Wolsey. But the domestic aims of the New Learning were foiled by the failure of the Ministry in its negotiations for the divorce. The severance of the French alliance and the accession of the Spanish party to power failed to detach Charles from his aunt's cause. The solemn remonstrance of the Parliament against the Pope's delay of justice produced little effect on Clement, who was now looking to the Emperor for the restoration of Florence to his Medicean house. The ministers eagerly accepted the suggestion of a Cambridge scholar, Thomas Cranmer, that the universities of Europe should be called on for their judgment; but the appeal to the learned opinion of Christendom ended in utter defeat. In France the profuse bribery of the English agents would have failed with the University of Paris but for the interference of Francis himself. As shameless an exercise of Henry's own authority was required to wring an approval of his cause from Oxford and Cambridge. In Germany the very Protestants, in the fervour of their moral revival, were dead against the King. So far as could be seen from Cranmer's test every learned man in Christendom condemned Henry's cause.

Cromwell and the Church

It was at the moment when every expedient had been exhausted by Norfolk and his fellow ministers that Cromwell came again to the front. Despair of other means drove Henry at last to adopt the bold plan from which he had shrunk at Wolsey's fall. The plan was simply that the King should disavow the Papal jurisdiction, declare himself Head of the Church within his realm, and obtain a divorce from his own Ecclesiastical Courts. But with Cromwell the divorce was but the prelude to a series of changes he was bent upon accomplishing. In all the chequered life of the new minister what had left its deepest stamp on him was Italy. Not only in the rapidity and ruthlessness of his designs, but in their larger scope, their clearer purpose, and their admirable combination, the Italian state-craft entered with Cromwell into English politics. He is, in fact, the first English minister in whom we can trace through the

whole period of his rule the steady working out of a great and definite purpose. His purpose was to raise the King to absolute authority on the ruins of every rival power within the realm. It was not that Cromwell was a mere slave of tyranny. Whether we may trust the tale that carries him in his youth to Florence or no, his statesmanship was closely modelled on the ideal of the Florentine thinker whose book was constantly in his hand. Even as a servant of Wolsey he startled the future Cardinal, Reginald Pole, by bidding him take for his manual in politics the "Prince" of Machiavelli. Machiavelli hoped to find in Cæsar Borgia, or in the later Lorenzo di Medici, a tyrant who after crushing all rival tyrannies might unite and regenerate Italy; and it is possible to see in the policy of Cromwell the aim of securing enlightenment and order for England by the concentration of all authority in the Crown. The one check on this royal absolutism which had survived the Wars of the Roses lay in the wealth, the independent synods and jurisdiction, and the religious claims of the Church. To reduce the great ecclesiastical body to a mere department of the State, in which all authority should flow from the sovereign alone, and in which his will should be the only law, his decision the only test of truth, was a change hardly to be wrought without a struggle; and it was the opportunity for such a struggle that Cromwell saw in the divorce. His first blow was decisive. He had saved Wolsey from the charge of treason, but he now suffered him to fall under the penalties of Præmunire for his exercise of Papal jurisdiction, as Legate, within the land. The whole nation was declared to have been formally involved in the same charge by its acceptance of his authority, but the legal absurdity was redressed by a general pardon. From this pardon the clergy alone found themselves omitted. They were told that forgiveness could be bought at no less a price than the payment of a fine amounting to a million of our present money, and the acknowledgment of the King as "Protector and only supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England." To the first demand they at once submitted; against the second they struggled hard, but their appeals to Henry and to Cromwell met only with demands for instant obedience. The words were at last submitted by Warham to the Convocation. There was a general silence. "Whoever is silent seems to consent," said the Archbishop. "Then are we all silent," replied a voice from among the crowd, and the assent was accepted. To every mind but Cromwell's the words seemed but a menace to the Pope, a threat which was backed by the demand for a settlement of the question addressed to Clement on the part of the House of Lords. "The cause of his Majesty," the Peers were made to say, "is the cause of each of ourselves." If Clement would not confirm what was described as the judgment of the Universities "our condition will not be wholly irremediable. Extreme remedies are ever harsh of application, but he that is sick will by all means be rid of his distemper." The expulsion of Catherine from the King's palace

1530 to 1540

1531

1530 to 1540 gave emphasis to the demand. But Cromwell still kept his hand on the troubled Churchmen. Convocation was made to propose the withdrawal of the payment of first-fruits to Rome on the promotion of bishops, and to petition that, should the Papacy resent such a step by a refusal to recognize the prelates who declined to pay them, then, "may it please your Highness to ordain in this present Parliament that the obedience of your Highness and of the people be withdrawn from the See of Rome." A bill to this effect was passed, but with a provision which suspended it as a menace over the Pope's head at the discretion of the Crown.

1531 Menaces, however, fell unheeded on the Roman Court. While still suggesting a compromise as to the main point at issue, Clement boldly rebuked Henry for the indelicacy of his relations with Anne Boleyn, who had taken her rival's place in the King's palace; and ordered him to restore Catherine, till the cause was tried, to her lawful position as Queen. By a brief which was posted on the church doors in Flanders, he inhibited him, on pain of excommunication, from seeking a divorce in his own English Courts, or from contracting a new marriage. Henry replied, not merely by a secret union with Anne Boleyn, but by a Statute of Appeals, which forbade all further processes in the Court of Rome and annihilated, as far as his English subjects were concerned, the judicial jurisdiction of the Papacy. Cranmer, an active partisan of the divorce,

1533 was named on Warham's death to the See of Canterbury; proceedings were at once commenced in his Court; and the marriage of Catherine was formally declared invalid by the new Primate at Dunstable. A week later Cranmer set on the brow of Anne Boleyn the crown which she had so long coveted.

The Supremacy

As yet the real character of Cromwell's ecclesiastical policy had been disguised by its connexion with the divorce. But though formal negotiations continued between England and Rome, until Clement's final decision in Catherine's favour, they had no longer any influence on the series of measures which in their rapid succession changed the whole character of the English Church. The acknowledgment of Henry's title as its Protector and Head was soon found by the clergy to have been more than a form of words. It was the first step in a policy by which the Church was to be prostrated at the foot of the throne. Convocation was forced to recognize the necessity of the Royal permission and assent for the validity of its proceedings and decisions. A new Act turned the bishops into mere nominees of the King. Their election by the chapters of their cathedral churches had long become formal, and their appointment had since the time of the Edwards been practically made by the Papacy on the nomination of the Crown. The privilege of free election was now with bitter irony left to the chapters, but they were compelled to receive the candidate chosen by the King on pain of præmunire. This strange expedient has lasted till the present time; but its character has wholly changed since the restoration of constitutional rule. The nomination of

bishops has ever since the accession of the Georges passed from the King in person to the minister who represents the will of the people. Practically, therefore, an English prelate, alone among all the prelates of the world, is now raised to his episcopal throne by the same popular election which raised Ambrose to his episcopal chair at Milan. But at the moment, Cromwell's measure reduced the English bishops to absolute dependence on the Crown. Their dependence would have been complete had his policy been thoroughly carried out, and the Royal power of deposition put in force as well as that of appointment. As it was, Henry could warn the Archbishop of Dublin that if he persevered in his "proud folly, we be able to remove you again and to put another man of more virtue and honesty in your place." Even Elizabeth in a burst of ill-humour threatened to "unfrock" the Bishop of Ely. By Cromwell's more ardent partizans this dependence of the bishops on the Crown was fully recognized. On the death of Henry the Eighth, Cranmer took out a new commission from Edward for the exercise of his office. Latimer, when the Royal policy clashed with his belief, felt bound to resign the See of Worcester. That the power of deposition was at a later time quietly abandoned was due not so much to any deference for the religious instincts of the nation, but to the fact that the steady servility of the bishops rendered it absolutely unnecessary. When Convocation was once silenced, and the bishops fairly at Henry's feet, the ground was cleared for the great Statute by which the new character of the Church was defined. The Act of Supremacy ordered that the King "shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme Head in earth of the Church of England, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the Imperial Crown of this realm as well the title and style thereof as all the honours, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, profits and commodities to the said dignity belonging, with full power to visit, repress, redress, reform, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction might or may lawfully be reformed." Authority in all matters ecclesiastical, as well as civil, was vested solely in the Crown. The "courts spiritual" became as thoroughly the King's courts as the temporal courts at Westminster. Convocation could only deliberate by the Royal license, and its decisions were of no validity without the Royal assent. It was the Crown alone which could legally repress error or redress spiritual abuses. But the full meaning which Cromwell attached to the Supremacy was seen on his elevation to the new post of Vicar-General, or Vice-gerent of the King in all matters ecclesiastical. His first act was to seize into the hands of the Crown the one means of speaking to the people at large which existed at that time. With the instinct of genius he discerned the part which the pulpit was to play in the religious and political struggle which was at hand, and he resolved to turn it to the profit of the monarchy. The clergy learned by injunction after injunction that

1530 to 1540

1534

1535

1530 to 1540 they were regarded, and must learn to regard themselves, as mere mouthpieces of the Royal will. The restriction of the right of preaching to priests who received licenses from the Crown silenced every voice of opposition. Even to those who received these licenses theological controversy was forbidden. The process of "tuning the pulpits" made them at every crisis the means of diffusing the Royal will. At the moment of Henry's last quarrel with Rome every bishop, abbot, and parish priest was required to preach against the usurpations of the Papacy and to proclaim the King as the Supreme Head of the Church. The very heads of the sermon were prescribed; and the bishops were held responsible for the compliance of the clergy with these orders, as the sheriffs were held responsible for the compliance of the bishops. It was only when all possibility of resistance was at an end, when the Church was gagged and its pulpits turned into mere echoes of Henry's will, that Cromwell ventured on his last and crowning change, that of claiming for the Crown the right of dictating at its pleasure the form of faith and doctrine to be held and taught throughout the land. A purified Catholicism such as Erasmus and Colet had dreamed of was now to be the religion of England. But the dream of the New Learning was to be wrought out, not by the progress of education and piety, but by the brute force of the New Monarchy. The Articles of Religion, which Convocation received and adopted without venturing on a protest, were drawn up by the hand of
1536 Henry himself. The Bible and the three Creeds were laid down as the sole grounds of faith. The Sacraments were reduced from seven to three, only Penance being allowed to rank on an equality with Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The assertion of the doctrines of Transubstantiation and Confession was compensated by the acknowledgment of Justification by Faith, a doctrine for which the friends of the New Learning, such as Pole and Contarini, were struggling at Rome itself. The spirit of Erasmus was seen in the condemnation of purgatory, of pardons, and of masses for the dead, in the admission of prayers for the dead, and in the retention of the ceremonies of the Church without material change. Enormous as was the doctrinal revolution, not a murmur broke the assent of Convocation, and the Articles were sent by the Vicar-General into every county to be obeyed at men's peril. The plans of the New Learning were carried steadily out in the series of Royal Injunctions which followed. Pilgrimages were suppressed; the excessive number of holydays diminished; the worship of images and relics discouraged in words which seem almost copied from the protest of Erasmus. His burning appeal for a translation of the Bible which weavers might repeat at their shuttle, and ploughmen sing at their plough received at last a reply. The Bible was formally adopted as the basis of English faith. As a preliminary measure the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments were at once translated into English, and ordered to be taught by every schoolmaster and father of a family to his children

or pupils. In the outset of the ministry of Norfolk and More, the King had promised a new version of the Scriptures, but the work lagged for five years in the hands of the bishops till Miles Coverdale, a friend of Cranmer, was employed to collect and revise the translations of Tyndale, and the Bible which he edited appeared under the avowed patronage of Henry himself. The story of the Supremacy was graven on its very title-page. The new foundation of religious truth was to be regarded throughout England as a gift, not from the Church, but from the King. It is Henry on his throne who gives the sacred volume to Cranmer, ere Cranmer and Cromwell can distribute it to the throng of priests and laymen below. 1530 to 1540

The temper of the New Learning was seen yet more clearly in Cromwell's attitude towards the monastic orders. In the early days of Erasmus popes and bishops had joined with princes and scholars in welcoming the diffusion of culture and the hopes of religious reform. But though an abbot or a prior here or there might be found among the supporters of the movement, the monastic orders, as a whole, repelled it with unswerving obstinacy. The quarrel only became more bitter as years went on. The keen sarcasms of Erasmus, the insolent buffoonery of Hutten, were lavished on the "lovers of darkness" and of the cloister. In England Colet and More echoed with greater reserve the scorn and invective of their friends. As an outlet for religious enthusiasm, indeed, monasticism was practically dead. The friar, now that his fervour of devotion and his intellectual energy had passed away, had sunk into the mere beggar. The monks had become mere landowners. Most of their houses were anxious only to enlarge their revenues and to diminish the number of those who shared them. In the general carelessness which prevailed as to the religious objects of their trust, in the wasteful management of their estates, in the indolence and self-indulgence which for the most part characterized them, the monastic houses simply exhibited the faults of all corporate bodies which have outlived the work which they were created to perform. But they were no more unpopular than such corporate bodies generally are. The Lollard cry for their suppression had died away. In the north, where some of the greatest abbeys were situated, the monks were on good terms with the country gentry, and their houses served as schools for their children; nor is there any sign of a different feeling elsewhere. But in Cromwell's system there was no room for either the virtues or the vices of monasticism, for its indolence and superstition, or for its independence both of the episcopate and the throne. While the changes we have narrated were going on, two Royal Commissioners, Legh and Leyton, had been despatched on a general visitation of the religious houses, and their reports formed a "Black Book" which was laid before Parliament on their return. It was acknowledged that about a third of the religious houses, including the bulk of the larger abbeys, were 1536

The Dissolution of the Monasteries

1530 to 1540

fairly and decently conducted. The rest were charged with drunkenness, with simony, and with the foulest and most revolting crimes. The character of the visitors, the sweeping nature of their report, and the long debate which followed on its reception, leaves little doubt that the charges were grossly exaggerated, but there is no ground for believing them to have been wholly untrue. The want of any effective discipline, which had resulted from their exemption from any but Papal supervision, told fatally against monastic morality, even in abbeys like St. Alban's; and the acknowledgment of Warham, as well as the partial measure of suppression begun by Wolsey, go far to prove that in the smaller houses, at least, indolence had passed into crime. But in spite of the cry of "Down with them" which broke from the Commons as the report was read, the country was still far from desiring the utter downfall of the monastic system. A long and bitter debate was followed by a compromise which suppressed all houses whose income fell below £200 a year, and granted their revenues to the Crown; but the great abbeys were still preserved intact.

The Terror

The debate on the suppression of the Monasteries was the first instance of opposition with which Cromwell had met, and for some time longer it was to remain the only one. While the great revolution which struck down the Church was in progress, England simply held her breath. It is only through the stray depositions of Royal spies that we catch a glimpse of the wrath and hate which lay seething under this terrible silence of a whole people. For the silence was a silence of terror. Before Cromwell's rise and after his fall from power the reign of Henry the Eighth witnessed no more than the common tyranny and bloodshed of the time. But the years of Cromwell's administration form the one period in our history which deserves the name which men have given to the rule of Robespierre. It was the English Terror. It was by terror that Cromwell mastered the King; it was by terror that he mastered the people. Cranmer could plead for him at a later time with Henry as "one whose surety was only by your Majesty, who loved your Majesty, as I ever thought, no less than God." But the attitude of Cromwell towards the King was something more than that of absolute dependence and unquestioning devotion. He was "so vigilant to preserve your Majesty from all treasons," adds the Primate, "that few could be so secretly conceived but he detected the same from the beginning." Henry, like every Tudor, was fearless of open danger, but tremulously sensitive to the lightest breath of hidden disloyalty. It was on this inner dread that Cromwell based the fabric of his power. He was hardly secretary before a host of spies were scattered broadcast over the land. Thousands of secret denunciations poured into the open ear of the minister. The air was soon thick with tales of plots and conspiracies, and with the detection and suppression of each Cromwell tightened his hold on the King. With Henry to back him he could strike boldly at England itself. The same terror

which had mastered the King was employed to master the people. Men felt in England—to use the figure by which Erasmus paints the time—"as if a scorpion lay sleeping under every stone." The confessional had no secrets for Cromwell. Men's talk with their closest friends found its way to his ear. "Words idly spoken," the murmurs of a petulant abbot, the ravings of a moon-struck nun, were, as the nobles cried passionately at his fall, "tortured into treason." The only chance of safety lay in silence. "Friends who used to write and send me presents," Erasmus tells us, "now send neither letter nor gifts, nor receive any from any one, and this through fear." But even the refuge of silence was closed by a law more infamous than any that has ever blotted the Statute-book of England. Not only was thought made treason, but men were forced to reveal their thoughts on pain of their very silence being punished with the penalties of treason. All trust in the older bulwarks of liberty was destroyed by a policy as daring as it was unscrupulous. The noblest institutions were degraded into instruments of terror. Though Wolsey had strained the law to the utmost he had made no open attack on the freedom of justice. If he had shrunk from assembling Parliaments it was from his sense that they were the bulwarks of liberty. Under Cromwell the coercion of juries and the management of judges rendered justice the mere mouthpiece of the royal will: and where even this shadow of justice proved an obstacle to bloodshed, Parliament was brought into play to pass bill after bill of attainder. "He shall be judged by the bloody laws he has himself made," was the cry of the Council at the moment of his fall, and by a singular retribution the crowning injustice which he sought to introduce even into the practice of attainder, the condemnation of a man without hearing his defence, was only practised on himself. But ruthless as was the Terror of Cromwell it was of a nobler type than the Terror of France. He never struck uselessly or capriciously, or stooped to the meaner victims of the Guillotine. His blows were effective just because he chose his victims from among the noblest and the best. If he struck at the Church it was through the Carthusians, the holiest and the most renowned of English Churchmen. If he struck at the baronage it was through Lady Salisbury, in whose veins flowed the blood of kings. If he struck at the New Learning it was through the murder of Sir Thomas More. But no personal vindictiveness mingled with his crime. In temper indeed, so far as we can judge from the few stories which lingered among his friends, he was a generous, kindly-hearted man, with pleasant and winning manners which atoned for a certain awkwardness of person, and with a constancy of friendship which won him a host of devoted adherents. But no touch either of love or hate swayed him from his course. The student of Machiavelli had not studied the "Prince" in vain. He had reduced bloodshed to a system. Fragments of his papers still show us with what a business-like brevity he ticked off human lives among the casual

1530 to 1540

1530 to 1540

"remembrances" of the day. "Item, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be tried and executed at Reading." "Item, to know the King's pleasure touching Master More." "Item, when Master Fisher shall go to his execution, and the other." It is indeed this utter absence of all passion, of all personal feeling, that makes the figure of Cromwell the most terrible in our history. He has an absolute faith in the end he is pursuing, and he simply hews his way to it as a woodman hews his way through the forest, axe in hand.

The Death of More

The choice of his first victim showed the ruthless precision with which Cromwell was to strike. In the general opinion of Europe the foremost Englishman of his time was Sir Thomas More. As the policy of the divorce ended in an open rupture with Rome he had withdrawn silently from the ministry, but his silent disapproval was more telling than the opposition of obscurer foes. To Cromwell there must have been something specially galling in More's attitude of reserve. The religious reforms of the New Learning were being rapidly carried out, but it was plain that the man who represented the very life of the New Learning believed that the sacrifice of liberty and justice was too dear a price to pay even for religious reform. More was believed to regard the divorce and re-marriage as religiously invalid, though his faith in the power of Parliament to regulate the succession made him regard the children of Anne Boleyn as the legal heirs of the Crown. Cromwell's ingenuity framed an Act of Succession which not only sanctioned the re-marriage but called on all who took the oath of allegiance to declare their belief in the religious validity of the divorce. The

1534

Act was no sooner passed than a Royal mandate bade More repair to Lambeth, to the house where he had bandied fun with Warham and Erasmus, or bent over the easel of Holbein. The summons was, as he knew, simply a summons to death, and for a moment there may have been some passing impulse to yield. But it was soon over. "I thank the Lord," More said, with a sudden start, as the boat dropped silently down the river from his garden steps at Chelsea in the early morning; "I thank the Lord that the field is won." Cranmer and his fellow commissioners tendered to him the new oath of allegiance; but, as they expected, it was refused. They bade him walk in the garden that he might reconsider his reply. The day was hot, and More seated himself in a window from which he could look down into the crowded court. Even in the presence of death, the strange sympathy of his nature could enjoy the humour and life of the throng below. "I saw," he said afterwards, "Master Latimer very merry in the court, for he laughed and took one or twain by the neck so handsomely that if they had been women I should have weened that he waxed wanton." The crowd below was chiefly of priests, rectors and vicars, pressing to take the oath that More found harder than death. He bore them no grudge for it. When he heard the voice of one who was known to have boggled hard at the oath a little

while before calling loudly and ostentatiously for drink, he only noted him with his peculiar humour. "He drank," More supposed, "either from dryness or from gladness" or "quod ille notus erat Pontifici." He was called in again at last, but only repeated his refusal. It was in vain that Cranmer plied him with distinctions which perplexed even the subtle wit of the ex-chancellor; he remained unshaken and passed to the Tower. For the moment even Cromwell shrank from his blood. More remained a prisoner, while new victims were chosen to overawe the silent but widely spread opposition to the bill of Supremacy. In the general relaxation of the religious life the charity and devotion of the brethren of the Charter-house had won the reverence even of those who condemned monasticism. After a stubborn resistance they had acknowledged the Royal Supremacy, and taken the oath of submission prescribed by the Act. But by an infamous construction of the statute which made the denial of the Supremacy treason, the refusal of satisfactory answers to official questions as to a conscientious belief in it was held to be equivalent to open denial. The aim of the new measure was well known, and the brethren prepared to die. In the agony of waiting, enthusiasm brought its imaginative consolations; "when the Host was lifted up there came as it were a whisper of air which breathed upon our faces as we knelt; and there came a sweet soft sound of music." They had not long, however, to wait. Their refusal to answer was the signal for their doom. Seven swung from the gallows; the rest were flung into Newgate, chained to posts in a noisome dungeon where, "tied and not able to stir," they were left to perish of gaol-fever and starvation. In a fortnight five were dead and the rest at the point of death, "almost dispatched," Cromwell's envoy wrote to him, "by the hand of God, of which, considering their behaviour, I am not sorry." The interval of imprisonment had failed to break the resolution of More, and the same means sufficed to bring him to the block. A mock trial was hardly necessary for his condemnation, or for that of Fisher, the most learned among the prelates who had favoured the New Learning, and who had been imprisoned on the same charge in the Tower. The old Bishop approached the block with a book of the New Testament in his hand. He opened it at a venture ere he knelt, and read "this is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God." Fisher's death was soon followed by that of More. On the eve of the fatal blow he moved his beard carefully from the block. "Pity that should be cut," he was heard to mutter with a touch of the old sad irony, "that has never committed treason." 1530 to 1540 1535

But it required, as Cromwell well knew, heavier blows even than these to break the stubborn resistance of Englishmen to his projects of change, and he seized his opportunity in the Revolt of the North. In the north the monks had been popular; and the outrages with which the dissolution of the smaller abbeys had been accompanied had stirred the blood of the nobles, who were already Cromwell and the Nobles

1530 to 1540 writhing beneath the rule of one whom they looked upon as a low-born upstart. "The world will never mend," Lord Hussey was heard to say, "till we fight for it." Agrarian discontent and the love of the old religion united in a revolt which broke out in 1536 Lincolnshire. The rising was hardly suppressed when Yorkshire was in arms. From every parish the farmers marched with the parish priest at their head upon York, and the surrender of the city determined the waverers. In a few days Skipton Castle, where the Earl of Cumberland held out with a handful of servants, was the only spot north of the Humber which remained true to the King. Durham rose at the call of Lords Latimer and Westmoreland. Though the Earl of Northumberland feigned sickness, the Percies joined the revolt. Lord Dacre, the chief of the Yorkshire nobles, surrendered Pomfret, and was at once acknowledged as their chief by the insurgents. The whole nobility of the north were now in arms, and thirty thousand "tall men and well horsed" moved on the Don demanding the reversal of the Royal policy, a reunion with Rome, the restoration of Catherine's daughter, Mary, to her rights as heiress of the Crown, redress for the wrongs done to the Church, and above all the fall of Cromwell. Though their advance was checked by negotiation, the organization of the revolt went steadily on throughout the winter, and a Parliament of the North gathered at Pomfret, and formally adopted the demands of the insurgents. Only six thousand men under Norfolk barred their way southward, and the Midland counties were known to be disaffected. Cromwell, however, remained undaunted by the peril. He suffered Norfolk to negotiate; and allowed Henry, under pressure from his Council, to promise pardon and a free Parliament at York, a pledge which Norfolk and Dacre alike construed into an acceptance of the demands made by the insurgents. Their leaders at once flung aside the badge of the Five Wounds which they had worn, with a cry "We will wear no badge but that of our Lord the King," and nobles and farmers dispersed to their homes in triumph. But the towns of the north were no sooner garrisoned, and Norfolk's army in the heart of Yorkshire, than 1537 the veil was flung aside. A few isolated outbreaks gave a pretext for the withdrawal of every concession. The arrest of the leaders of the "Pilgrimage of Grace," as the insurrection was styled, was followed by ruthless severities. The country was covered with gibbets. Whole districts were given up to military execution. But it was on the nobles that Cromwell's hand fell heaviest. It was only in the north and in the west that any of the old feudal force lingered among them, and he seized his opportunity for dealing at it a last and fatal blow. "Cromwell," Darcy broke fiercely out as he stood at the Council board, "it is thou that art the very special and chief cause of all this rebellion and wickedness, and dost daily travail to bring us to our ends and strike off our heads. I trust that ere thou die, though thou wouldst procure all the noblest heads within the realm to be stricken off, yet there shall one head remain

that shall strike off thy head." But the warning was unheeded. 1530 to 1540
Lord Darcy, who stood at the head of the nobles of Yorkshire, and Lord Hussey, who stood at the head of the nobles of Lincolnshire, went alike to the block. The Abbot of Barlings, who had ridden into Lincoln with his canons in full armour, swung with his brother Abbot of Kirkstead from the gallows. The Abbots of Fountains and of Jervaulx were hanged at Tyburn side by side with the representative of the great line of Percy. Lady Bulmer was burnt at the stake. Sir Robert Constable was hanged in chains before the gate of Hull. The blow to the north had hardly been dealt when Cromwell turned to deal with the west, the one other quarter where feudalism still retained its vigour. The two houses of the Courtenays and the Poles, linked to each other by close intermarriages, stood first in descent among the English nobles. Margaret Plantagenet, the Countess of Salisbury, a daughter of the Duke of Clarence by the heiress of the Earl of Warwick, was at once representative of the Nevilles and a niece of Edward the Fourth. Her third son, Reginald Pole, after refusing the highest offers from Henry as the price of his approval of the divorce, had taken refuge in Rome, where he had been raised to the Cardinalate. He was now preparing an attack on the King in his book "On the Unity of the Church." "There may be found ways enough in Italy," Cromwell wrote to him in significant words, "to rid a treacherous subject. When Justice can take no peace by process of law at home, sometimes she may be enforced to take new means abroad." But he had left hostages in Henry's hands. "Pity that the folly of one witless fool should be the ruin of so great a family. Let him follow ambition as fast as he can, these that little have offended (saving that he is of their kin) were it not for the great mercy and benignity of the prince, should and might feel what it is to have such a traitor to their kinsman." Pole answered by the publication of his book, and by an appeal to the Emperor to execute the Bull of Deposition which was now launched by the Papacy. Cromwell was quick with his reply. Courtenay, the Marquis of Exeter, was a kinsman of the Poles, and like them of royal blood, a grandson through his mother of Edward the Fourth. His influence over the west was second only to the hold which the Duke of Norfolk had upon the eastern counties. His discontent at Cromwell's system broke out in words of defiance. "Knaves rule about the King," Exeter is reported to have said, "I trust to give them a buffet one day." He was at once arrested with Lord 1539
Montague, Pole's elder brother, as accomplices of the Cardinal, and both were beheaded on Tower Hill. Two years after the grey hairs of Lady Salisbury lay dabbled with blood upon the same fatal block.

CHAPTER VII

THE REFORMATION

Section I.—The Protestants, 1540—1553

[*Authorities.*—In addition to authorities already mentioned, see Strype's "Ecclesiastical Memorials," Pocock's "Records of the Reformation," and Burnet, "History of the Reformation," for original documents. For the reign of Edward VI., Holinshed's "Chronicle," and the "Literary Remains of Edward VI." (edited Nichols). Pollard's "Political History of England, 1547-1603," and "Protector Somerset," may be mentioned among modern works. For Latimer, see his Sermons (Parker Society).]

Cromwell's policy and its results

With the death of Lord Exeter and Lady Salisbury the New Monarchy reached the height of its power. The old English liberties lay prostrate at the feet of the King. The Lords were powerless, the House of Commons filled with the creatures of the Court, and degraded into the mere engine of tyranny. Royal proclamations were taking the place of parliamentary legislation, benevolences were encroaching more and more on the right of parliamentary taxation, Justice was prostituted in the ordinary courts to the royal will, while the boundless and arbitrary powers of the Royal Council were gradually superseding the slower processes of the Common Law. The new religious changes had thrown an almost sacred character over the "majesty" of the King. Henry was the Head of the Church. From the primate to the meanest deacon every minister of it derived from him his sole right to exercise spiritual powers. The voice of its preachers was the mere echo of his will. He alone could define orthodoxy or declare heresy. The forms of its worship and belief were changed and rechanged at the royal caprice. Half of its wealth went to swell the royal treasury, and the other half lay at the King's mercy. It was this unprecedented concentration of all power in the hands of a single man that overawed the imagination of Henry's subjects. He was regarded as something high above the laws which govern common men. The voices of statesmen and of priests extolled his wisdom and power as more than human. The Parliament itself rose and bowed to the vacant throne when his name was mentioned. An absolute devotion to his person replaced the old loyalty to the law. When the Primate of the English Church described the chief merit of Cromwell, it was by asserting that he loved the King "no less than he loved God."

It was indeed Cromwell, as we have seen, who, more than any man, had reared this fabric of king-worship; but he had hardly reared it before it began to give way. In three cardinal points the success of his measures brought about the ruin of his policy. One

of its most striking features had been his revival of Parliaments. The great assembly which the New Monarchy, from Edward the Fourth to Wolsey, had dreaded and silenced, was boldly called to the front again by Cromwell; and turned into the most formidable weapon of the royal will. The suppression of the mitred Abbots, and a large creation of new peerages in favour of Court favourites and dependants, left the House of Lords yet more helpless against the Crown than of old. The House of Commons was crowded with members nominated by the Royal Council. With such Houses Cromwell had no difficulty in making the nation itself, whether it would or no, an accomplice in the work of absolutism. It was by Parliamentary statutes that the Church was destroyed, and freedom gagged with new treasons and oaths and questionings. It was by bills of attainder promoted in Parliament that the great nobles were brought to the block. But the success of such a system depended wholly on the absolute servility of Parliament to the will of the Crown. On one occasion during Cromwell's own rule a "great debate" had shown that elements of resistance still survived, elements which we shall see developing rapidly as the terror passes away, and as the power of the Crown declines under the minority of Edward and the unpopularity of Mary. As in the modern instance of Hungary, the part which the Parliament was to play in the period which followed Cromwell's fall shows the importance of clinging to the forms of constitutional freedom, even when their life seems lost. In the inevitable reaction against tyranny they afford centres for the reviving energies of the people. It is of hardly less importance that the tide of liberty, when it again returns, is enabled through their preservation to flow quietly and naturally along its traditional channels. And to this revival of a spirit of independence Henry largely contributed in the spoliation of the Church and the dissolution of the monasteries. Partly from necessity, partly from a desire to create a large party interested in the maintenance of their ecclesiastical policy, Cromwell and the King squandered the vast mass of wealth which flowed into the Treasury with reckless prodigality. Something like a fifth of the actual land in the kingdom was in this way transferred from the holding of the Church to that of nobles and gentry. Not only were the older houses enriched, but a new aristocracy was erected from among the dependants of the Court. The Russells, Cavendishes, and Fitzwilliams are familiar instances of families which rose from obscurity through the enormous grants of Church-land made to Henry's courtiers. The old baronage was hardly crushed before a new aristocracy took its place. "Those families within or without the bounds of the peerage," observes Mr. Hallam, "who are now deemed the most considerable, will be found, with no great number of exceptions, to have first become conspicuous under the Tudor line of kings, and if we could trace the title of their estates, to have acquired no small portion of them mediately or immediately from monastic or other ecclesi-

1540 to 1553

1540 to 1553

astical foundations." The leading part which the new peers took in the events which followed Henry's death gave a fresh strength and vigour to the whole order. But the smaller gentry shared in the general enrichment of the landed proprietors, and the new energy of the Lords was soon followed by a display of fresh political independence among the Commons themselves.

The Protestants

But it was above all in the new energy, which the religious spirit of the people at large drew from the ecclesiastical changes which he had brought about, that the policy of Cromwell was fatal to the New Monarchy. Lollardism, as a great social and popular movement, had ceased with the suppression of Cobham's revolt, and little remained of the directly religious impulse given by Wyclif beyond a vague restlessness and discontent with the system of the Church. But weak and fitful as was the life of Lollardism, the prosecutions whose records lie so profusely scattered over the bishop's registers failed wholly to kill it. We see groups meeting here and there to read "in a great book of heresy all one night certain chapters of the Evangelists in English," while transcripts of Wyclif's tracts passed from hand to hand. The smouldering embers needed but a breath to fan them into flame, and the breath came from William Tyndale. A young scholar from Oxford, he was drawn from his retirement in Gloucestershire by the news of Luther's protest at Wittenberg, and after a brief stay in London we find him on his way to the little town which had suddenly become the sacred city of the Reformation. Students of all nations were flocking there with an enthusiasm which resembled that of the Crusades. "As they came in sight of the town," a contemporary tells us, "they returned thanks to God with clasped hands, for from Wittenberg as heretofore from Jerusalem the light of evangelical truth hath

1525

spread to the utmost parts of the earth." Retiring to Hamburg Tyndale translated the Gospels and Epistles; and his press at Cologne and at Worms, where he was joined by a few scholars from Cambridge, was soon busy with his versions of the Scriptures, and with reprints of the tracts of Wyclif and of Luther. These were smuggled over to England and circulated among the poorer and trading classes through the agency of an association of "Christian Brethren," consisting principally of London tradesmen and citizens, but whose missionaries spread over the country at large. They found their way at once to the Universities, where the intellectual impulse given by the New Learning was quickening religious speculation. Cambridge had already won a name for heresy, and the Cambridge scholars whom Wolsey introduced into Cardinal College spread the contagion through Oxford. Tyndale himself was an instance of their influence. The group of "Brethren" which was formed in Cardinal College for the secret reading and discussion of the Epistles soon included the more intelligent and learned scholars of the University. It was in vain that Clark, the centre of this group, strove to dissuade fresh members from joining it by warnings of the impending dangers. "I fell down on my knees

at his feet," says one of them, Anthony Dalaber, "and with tears and sighs besought him that for the tender mercy of God he should not refuse me, saying that I trusted verily that He who had begun this on me would not forsake me, but would give me grace to continue therein to the end. When he heard me say so he came to me, took me in his arms, and kissed me, saying, 'The Lord God Almighty grant you so to do, and from henceforth ever take me for your father, and I will take you for my son in Christ.'" The rapid diffusion of Tyndale's works, and their vehement attacks on the bishops and the Church, roused Wolsey at last to action. At Oxford the "Brethren" were thrown into prison and their books seized; in London a pile of Testaments was burned in St. Paul's Churchyard, and a few heretics recanted before the Cardinal in its nave. But in spite of the panic of the Protestants, who fled in crowds over sea, little severity was really exercised; and it was not till Wolsey's fall that forbearance was thrown aside. 1540 to 1553 1527

The anxiety both of the Cardinal and the King lest in the outburst against heresy the reformers of the New Learning should suffer harm, was remarkably shown in the protection they extended to one who was destined to eclipse even the fame of Colet as a popular preacher. Hugh Latimer was the son of a Leicestershire yeoman, whose armour the boy had buckled on ere he set out to meet the Cornish insurgents at Blackheath field. He has himself described the soldierly training of his youth. "My father was delighted to teach me to shoot with the bow. He taught me how to draw, how to lay my body to the bow, not to draw with strength of arm as other nations do but with the strength of the body." At fourteen he was at Cambridge, flinging himself into the New Learning which was winning its way there, with a zeal which at last told on his physical strength. The ardour of his mental efforts left its mark on him in ailments and enfeebled health, from which, vigorous as he was, his frame never wholly freed itself. But he was destined to be known, not as a scholar, but as a preacher. The sturdy good sense of the man shook off the pedantry of the schools as well as the subtlety of the theologian in his addresses from the pulpit. He had little turn for speculation, and in the religious changes of the day we find him constantly lagging behind his brother reformers. But he had the moral earnestness of a Jewish prophet, and his denunciations of wrong had a prophetic directness and fire. "Have pity on your soul," he cried to Henry, "and think that the day is even at hand when you shall give an account of your office, and of the blood that hath been shed by your sword." His irony was yet more telling than his invective. "I would ask you a strange question," he said once at Paul's Cross to a ring of Bishops, "who is the most diligent prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing of his office? I will tell you. It is the Devil! of all the pack of them that have cure, the Devil shall go for my money; for he ordereth his business. Therefore, you unpreaching prelates, learn of the Devil to be diligent in your Latimer b. 1490

1540 to 1543

office. If you will not learn of God, for shame learn of the Devil." But he is far from limiting himself to invective. His homely humour breaks in with story and apologue; his earnestness is always tempered with good sense; his plain and simple style quickens with a shrewd mother-wit. He talks to his hearers as a man talks to his friends, telling stories such as we have given of his own life at home, or chatting about the changes and chances of the day with a transparent simplicity and truth that raises even his chat into grandeur. His theme is always the actual world about him, and in his homely lessons of loyalty, of industry, of pity for the poor, he touches upon almost every subject, from the plough to the throne. No such preaching had been heard in England before his day, and with the growth of his fame grew the danger of persecution. There were moments when, bold as he was, Latimer's heart failed him. "If I had not trust that God will help me," he wrote once, "I think the ocean sea would have divided my lord of London and me by this day." A citation for heresy at last brought the danger home. "I intend," he wrote with his peculiar medley of humour and pathos, "to make merry with my parishioners this Christmas, for all the sorrow, lest perchance I may never return to them again." But he was saved throughout by the steady protection of the Court. Wolsey upheld him against the threats of the Bishop of Ely; Henry made him his own chaplain; and the King's interposition at this critical moment forced Latimer's judges to content themselves with a few vague words of submission.

Cromwell and the Protestants 1536

Henry's quarrel with Rome soon snatched the Protestants from the keener persecution which troubled them after Wolsey's fall. The divorce, the renunciation of the Papacy, the degradation of the clergy, the suppression of the monasteries, the religious changes, fell like a series of heavy blows upon the priesthood. From persecutors they suddenly sank into men trembling for their very lives. Those whom they had threatened were placed at their head. Shaxton, a favourer of the new changes, was raised to the see of Salisbury; Barlow, a yet more extreme partizan, to that of St. David's. Latimer himself became Bishop of Worcester, and in a vehement address to the clergy in Convocation taunted them with their greed and superstition in the past, and with their inactivity when the King and his Parliament were labouring for the revival of religion. The aim of Cromwell, as we have seen, was simply that of the New Learning; he desired religious reform rather than revolution, a simplification rather than change of doctrine, the purification of worship rather than the introduction of a new ritual. But it was impossible for him to strike blow after blow at the Church without leaning instinctively to the party who sympathized with the German reformation, and were longing for a more radical change at home. The Protestants, as these were called, appealed to him against the Bishops' Courts, and looked for their security to the "rattling letters" from the Vicar-General, which damped the zeal of their opponents. Few as they still were in numbers,

their new hopes made them a formidable force; and in the school of persecution they had learnt a violence which delighted in outrages on the faith which had so long trampled them under foot. 1540 to 1553 At the very outset of Cromwell's changes four Suffolk boys broke into the church at Doverscourt, tore down a wonder-working crucifix, and burned it in the fields. The suppression of the lesser monasteries was the signal for a new outburst of ribald insult to the old religion. The roughness, insolence, and extortion of the Commissioners sent to effect it drove the whole monastic body to despair. Their servants rode along the road with copes for doublets, and tunicles for saddle-cloths, and scattered panic among the larger houses which were left. Some sold their jewels and relics to provide for the evil day they saw approaching. Some begged of their own will for dissolution. It was worse when fresh ordinances of the Vicar-General ordered the removal of objects of superstitious veneration. The removal, bitter enough to those whose religion twined itself around the image or the relic which was taken away, was yet more embittered by the insults with which it was accompanied. The miraculous rood at Boxley, which bowed its head and stirred its eyes, was paraded from market to market and exhibited as a juggle before the Court. Images of the Virgin were stripped of their costly vestments and sent to be publicly burnt at London. Latimer forwarded to the capital the figure of Our Lady, which he had thrust out of his cathedral church at Worcester, with rough words of scorn: "She, with her old sister of Walsingham, her younger sister of Ipswich, and their two other sisters of Doncaster and Penrice, would make a jolly muster at Smithfield." Fresh orders were given to fling all relics from their reliquaries, and to level every shrine with the ground. The bones of St. Thomas of Canterbury were torn from the stately shrine which had been the glory of his metropolitan church, and his name erased from the service books as that of a traitor. The introduction of the English Bible into churches gave a new opening for the zeal of the Protestants. In spite of Royal injunctions that it should be read decently and without comment, the young zealots of the party prided themselves on shouting it out to a circle of excited hearers during the service of mass, and accompanied their reading with violent expositions. Protestant maidens took the new English primer to church with them, and studied it ostentatiously during matins. Insult passed into open violence when the Bishops' Courts were invaded and broken up by Protestant mobs; and law and public opinion were outraged at once, when priests who favoured the new doctrines began openly to bring home wives to their vicarages. A fiery outburst of popular discussion compensated for the silence of the pulpits. The new Scriptures, in Henry's bitter words of complaint, were "disputed, rhymed, sung, and jangled in every tavern and alehouse." The articles which dictated the belief of the English Church roused a furious controversy. Above all, the Sacrament of the Mass, the centre of the Catholic system of faith

1540 to 1553

and worship, and which still remained sacred to the bulk of Englishmen, was attacked with a scurrility and profaneness which passes belief. The doctrine of Transubstantiation, which was as yet recognized by law, was held up to scorn in ballads and mystery plays. In one church a Protestant lawyer raised a dog in his hands when the priest elevated the Host. The most sacred words of the old worship, the words of consecration, "Hoc est corpus," were travestied into a nickname for jugglery, as "Hocus-pocus." It was by this attack on the Mass, even more than by the other outrages, that the temper both of Henry and the nation was stirred to a deep

1539

resentment; and the first signs of reaction were seen in the Law of the Six Articles, which was passed by the Parliament with almost universal assent. On the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which was re-asserted by the first of these, there was no difference of feeling or belief between the men of the New Learning and the older Catholics. But the road to a further instalment of even moderate reform seemed closed by the five other articles which sanctioned communion in one kind, the celibacy of the clergy, monastic vows, private masses, and auricular confession. A more terrible feature of the reaction was the revival of persecution. Burning was denounced as the penalty for a denial of transubstantiation; it was only on a second offence that it became the penalty for an infraction of the other five doctrines. A refusal to confess or to attend Mass was made felony. It was in vain that Cranmer, with the five bishops who partially sympathized with the Protestants, struggled against the bill in the Lords: the Commons were "all of one opinion," and Henry himself acted as spokesman on the side of the Articles. But, zealous as he was for order, Henry was still true in heart to the cause of a moderate reform; and Cromwell, though he had bent to the storm, was quick to profit by the vehemence of the Catholic reaction. In London alone five hundred Protestants were indicted under the new act. Latimer and Shaxton were imprisoned, and the former forced into a resignation of his see. Cranmer himself was only saved by Henry's personal favour. But the first burst of triumph had no sooner spent itself than the strong hand of Cromwell was again felt by the Catholic zealots. The bishops were quietly released. The London indictments were quashed. The magistrates were roughly checked in their enforcement of the law, while a general pardon cleared the prisons of the heretics who had been arrested under its provisions. A few months after its enactment we find, from a Protestant letter, that persecution had wholly ceased, "the Word is powerfully preached and books of every kind may safely be exposed for sale."

The Fall of Cromwell

Never indeed had Cromwell shown such greatness as in his last struggle against Fate. "Beknaved" by the King whose confidence in him was hourly waning, and met by a growing opposition in the Council as his favour declined, the temper of the man remained indomitable as ever. He stood absolutely alone. Wolsey, hated as he had been by the nobles, had been supported by the Church; but

Churchmen hated Cromwell with an even fiercer hate than the nobles themselves. His only friends were the Protestants, and their friendship was more fatal than the hatred of his foes. But he showed no signs of fear or of halting in the course he had entered on. His activity was as boundless as ever. Like Wolsey he had concentrated in his hands the whole administration of the state; he was at once foreign minister and home minister and Vicar-General of the Church, the creator of a new fleet, the organizer of armies, the president of the terrible Star Chamber. But his Italian indifference to the mere show of power contrasted strongly with the pomp of the Cardinal. His personal habits were simple and unostentatious. If he clutched at money it was to feed the vast army of spies whom he maintained at his own expense, and whose work he surveyed with a sleepless vigilance. More than fifty volumes still remain of the gigantic mass of his correspondence. Thousands of letters from "poor bedesmen," from outraged wives and wronged labourers and persecuted heretics, flowed in to the all-powerful minister, whose system of personal government had turned him into the universal court of appeal. So long as Henry supported him, however reluctantly, he was more than a match, even single-handed, for his foes. He met the hostility of the nobles with a threat which marked his power. "If the Lords would handle him so, he would give them such a breakfast as never was made in England, and that the proudest of them should know." He was strong enough to expel the Bishop of Winchester, Gardiner, who had become his chief opponent, from the Royal Council. His single will forced on a scheme of foreign policy, whose aim was to bind England to the cause of the Reformation, while it bound Henry helplessly to his minister. The daring boast which his enemies laid afterwards to his charge, whether uttered or not, is but the expression of his policy. "In brief time he would bring things to such a pass that the King with all his power should not be able to hinder him." His plans rested, like the plan which proved fatal to Wolsey, on a fresh marriage of his master. The short-lived royalty of Anne Boleyn had ended in charges of adultery and treason, and in her death in May, 1536. Her rival and successor in Henry's affections, Jane Seymour, died next year in child-birth; and Cromwell replaced her with a German consort, Anne of Cleves, the sister-in-law of the Lutheran elector of Saxony. He dared even to resist Henry's caprice, when the King revolted on their first interview at the coarse features and unwieldy form of his new bride. For the moment Cromwell had brought matters "to such a pass" that it was impossible to recoil from the marriage. But the marriage of Anne of Cleves was but the first step in a policy which, had it been carried out as he designed it, would have anticipated the triumphs of Richelieu. Charles and the House of Austria could alone bring about a Catholic reaction strong enough to arrest and roll back the Reformation; and Cromwell was no sooner united with the princes of North Germany than he sought to league them

1540 to 1553

January, 1540

1540 to 1553

with France for the overthrow of the Emperor. Had he succeeded, the whole face of Europe would have been changed, Southern Germany would have been secured for Protestantism, and the Thirty Years' War averted. He failed as men fail who stand ahead of their age. The German princes shrunk from a contest with the Emperor, France from a struggle which would be fatal to Catholicism; and Henry, left alone to bear the resentment of the House of Austria, and chained to a wife he loathed, turned savagely on Cromwell. The nobles sprang on him with a fierceness that told of their long-hoarded hate. Taunts and execrations burst from the Lords at the Council table, as the Duke of Norfolk, who had

June, 1540

been charged with the minister's arrest, tore the ensign of the Garter insolently from his neck. At the charge of treason Cromwell flung his cap on the ground with a passionate cry of despair. "This then," he exclaimed, "is my guerdon for the services I have done! On your consciences, I ask you, am I a traitor?" Then with a sudden sense that all was over he bade his foes "make quick work, and not leave me to languish in prison."

The Death of Henry the Eighth

Quick work was made, and a yet louder burst of popular applause than that which hailed the attainder of Cromwell, hailed his execution. For the moment his designs seemed to be utterly abandoned. The marriage with Anne of Cleves was annulled, and a new Queen found in Catherine Howard, a girl of the house of Norfolk. Norfolk himself, who stood, as before Cromwell's rise, at the head of affairs, resumed the policy which Cromwell had interrupted. With the older nobles generally, he still clung to the dream of the New Learning, to a purification of the Church through a general Council, and to the reconciliation of England with the purified body of Catholicism. For such a purpose it was necessary to vindicate English orthodoxy; and to ally England with the Emperor, by whose influence alone the assembly of such a Council could be brought about. Norfolk and his master remained true to the principles of the earlier reform. The reading of the Bible was still permitted, though its disorderly expositions were put down. The publication of an English Litany furnished the germ of the national

1539

Prayer Book of a later time. The greater Abbeys, which had been saved by the energetic resistance of the Parliament in 1536, had in 1539 been involved in the same ruin with the smaller. There was no thought of reviving the old superstitions, or undoing the work which had been done, but simply of guarding the purified faith against Lutheran heresy. It was for this purpose that the Six Articles were once more put in force, and a Committee of State named to guard against the progress of heresy; while the friendship of England was offered to Charles, when the struggle between France and the House of Austria burst again for a time into flame. But,

1543

as Cromwell had foreseen, the time for a peaceful reform and for a general reunion of Christendom was past. The Council, so passionately desired, met at Trent in no spirit of conciliation, but to ratify the very superstitions and errors against which the New Learning

had protested, and which England and Germany had flung away. The long hostility of France and the House of Austria merged in the greater struggle which was opening between Catholicism and the Reformation. The Emperor, from whom Norfolk looked for a purification of the Church, established the Inquisition in Flanders. As their hopes of a middle course faded, the Catholic nobles themselves drifted unconsciously with the tide of reaction. The persecution of the Protestants took a new vigour. Anne Ascue, a lady of the Court, was tortured and burnt for her denial of Transubstantiation. Latimer was seized; and Cranmer himself, who in the general dissolution of the moderate party was drifting towards Protestantism as Norfolk was drifting towards Rome, was for a moment in danger. But at the last hours of his life Henry proved himself true to the work he had begun. His resolve not to return to the obedience of Rome threw him, whether he would or no, back on the policy of the great minister whom he had hurried to the block. He offered to unite in a "League Christian" with the German Princes. He suddenly consented to the change, suggested by Cranmer, of the Mass into a Communion Service. He flung the Duke of Norfolk into the Tower as a traitor, sent his son, the Earl of Surrey, to the block, and placed the Earl of Hertford, who was known as a patron of the Protestants, at the head of the Council of Regency which he nominated at his death.

1540 to 1553

1546

1547

Catherine Howard atoned like Anne Boleyn for her unchastity by a traitor's death; her successor on the throne, Catherine Parr, had the luck to outlive the King. But of Henry's numerous marriages only three children survived; Mary and Elizabeth, the daughters of Catherine of Arragon and of Anne Boleyn, and Edward, the boy who now ascended the throne as Edward the Sixth, his son by Jane Seymour. The will of Henry had placed Jane's brother, whom he had raised to the peerage as Lord Hertford, and who at a later time assumed the title of Duke of Somerset, at the head of a Council of Regency in which the adherents of the old and new system were carefully balanced; but his first act was to expel the former from the Council, and to seize the whole Royal power with the title of Protector. Hertford's personal weakness forced him at once to seek for popular support by measures which marked the first retreat of the New Monarchy from the position of pure absolutism which it had reached under Henry. A fatal Statute, which at the close of the late reign had given to Royal proclamations the force of law, was repealed. The new felonies and treasons, which Cromwell had created and used with so terrible an effect, were erased from the Statute Book. The hope of support from the Protestants united with Hertford's personal predilections in his patronage of the innovations against which Henry had battled to the last. Cranmer, as we have seen, had drifted into a purely Protestant position; and his open break with the older system followed quickly on Hertford's rise to power. "This year," says a contemporary, "the Archbishop of Canterbury did eat meat

Somerset

1540 to 1553

openly in Lent in the Hall of Lambeth, the like of which was never seen since England was a Christian country." This significant act was followed by a rapid succession of sweeping changes. The legal prohibitions of Lollardry were removed; the Six Articles were repealed; a Royal injunction removed all pictures and images from the churches; priests were permitted to marry; the new Communion which had taken the place of the Mass was ordered to be administered in both kinds, and in the English tongue; an English book of Common Prayer, the Liturgy, which with slight alterations is still used in the Church of England, replaced the Missal and Breviary from which its contents are mainly drawn; a new Catechism embodied the doctrines of Cranmer and his friends; and a Book of Homilies compiled in the same sense was appointed to be read in churches. These sweeping religious changes were carried through with the despotism, if not with the vigour, of

1548

Cromwell. Gardiner, who in his servile acceptance of the personal supremacy of the sovereign denounced all ecclesiastical changes made during the King's minority as illegal and invalid, was sent to the Tower. The power of preaching was restricted by the issue of licences only to the friends of the Primate. While all counter arguments were rigidly suppressed, a crowd of Protestant pamphleteers flooded the country with vehement invectives against the Mass and its superstitious accompaniments. The assent of the nobles about the court was won by the suppression of chauntries and religious gilds, and by glutting their greed with the last spoils of the Church. German and Italian mercenaries were introduced

1549

to stamp out the wider popular discontent which broke out in the east, in the west, and in the midland counties. The Cornishmen refused to receive the new service "because it is like a Christmas game." Devonshire demanded in open revolt the restoration of the Mass and the Six Articles. The agrarian discontent woke again in the general disorder. Twenty thousand men gathered round the "oak of Reformation" near Norwich, and repulsing the Royal troops in a desperate engagement, renewed the old cries for a removal of evil counsellors, a prohibition of enclosures, and redress for the grievances of the poor.

The Protestant Misrule

Revolt was everywhere stamped out in blood; but the weakness which the Protector had shown in presence of the danger, and the irritation caused by the sanction he had given to the agrarian demands of the insurgents, ended in his fall. He was forced by his own party to resign, and his power passed to the Earl of Warwick, to whose ruthless severity the suppression of the revolt was mainly due. The change of governors, however, brought about no change of system. The rule of the upstart nobles who formed the Council of Regency became simply a rule of terror. "The greater part of the people," one of their creatures, Cecil, avowed, "is not in favour of defending this cause, but of aiding its adversaries, the greater part of the nobles who absent themselves from Court, all the bishops save three or four, almost all the judges and lawyers,

almost all the justices of the peace, the priests who can move their flocks any way, for the whole of the commonalty is in such a state of irritation that it will easily follow any stir towards change." But with their triumph over the revolt, Cranmer and his colleagues advanced yet more boldly in the career of innovation. Four prelates who adhered to the older system were deprived of their sees and committed on frivolous pretexts to the Tower. A crowning defiance was given to the doctrine of the Mass by an order to demolish the stone altars, and replace them by wooden tables, which were stationed for the most part in the middle of the church. The new Prayer-book was revised, and every change made in it leant directly towards the extreme Protestantism which was at this time finding a home at Geneva. The Forty-two Articles of Religion, which were now introduced, though since reduced by omissions to thirty-nine, have remained to this day the formal standard of doctrine in the English Church. The sufferings of the Protestants had failed to teach them the worth of religious liberty; and a new code of ecclesiastical laws, which was ordered to be drawn up by a board of Commissioners as a substitute for the Canon Law of the Catholic Church, although it shrank from the penalty of death, attached that of perpetual imprisonment or exile to the crimes of heresy, blasphemy, and adultery, and declared excommunication to involve a severance of the offender from the mercy of God, and his deliverance into the tyranny of the devil. Delays in the completion of this Code prevented its legal establishment during Edward's reign (it was quietly dropped by Elizabeth), but the use of the new Liturgy and attendance at the new service was enforced by imprisonment, and subscription to the Articles of Faith was demanded by Royal authority from all clergymen, churchwardens, and schoolmasters. The distaste for changes so hurried, and so rigorously enforced, was increased by the daring speculations of the more extreme Protestants. The real value of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century to mankind lay, not in its substitution of one creed for another, but in the new spirit of inquiry, the new freedom of thought and of discussion, which was awakened during the process of change. But however familiar such a truth may be to us, it was absolutely hidden from the England of the time. Men heard with horror that the foundations of faith and morality were questioned, polygamy advocated, oaths denounced as unlawful, community of goods raised into a sacred obligation, the very Godhead of the Founder of Christianity denied. The repeal of the Statute of Heresy left the powers of the Common Law intact, and Cranmer availed himself of these to send heretics of the last class without mercy to the stake; but within the Church itself the Primate's desire for uniformity was roughly resisted by the more ardent members of his own party. Hooper, who had been named Bishop of Gloucester, refused to wear the episcopal habits, and denounced them as the livery of the "harlot of Babylon," a name for the Papacy which was supposed to have been discovered

1540 to 1553

1552

1540 to 1553 in the Apocalypse. Ecclesiastical order was almost at an end. Priests flung aside the surplice as superstitious. Patrons of livings presented their huntsmen or game keepers to the benefices in their gift, and pocketed the stipend. All teaching of divinity ceased at the Universities: the students indeed had fallen off in numbers, the libraries were in part scattered or burnt, the intellectual impulse of the New Learning had died away. One noble measure indeed, the foundation of eighteen Grammar Schools, was destined to throw a lustre over the name of Edward, but it had no time to bear fruit in his reign. All that men saw was religious and political chaos, in which ecclesiastical order had perished, and in which politics were dying down into the squabbles of a knot of nobles over the spoils of the Church and the Crown. The plunder of the chauntries and the gilds failed to glut the appetite of the crew of spoilers. Half the lands of every see were flung to them in vain; the see of Durham had been wholly suppressed to satisfy their greed; and the whole endowments of the Church were now threatened with confiscation. But while the courtiers gorged themselves with manors, the Treasury grew poorer. The coinage was debased. Crown lands to the value of five millions of our modern money had been granted away to the friends of Somerset and Warwick. The Royal expenditure had mounted in seventeen years to more than four times its previous total. It is clear that England must soon have risen against the misrule of the Protectorate, if the Protectorate had not fallen by the intestine divisions of the plunderers themselves.

The aim of Cromwell's foreign policy was perhaps less to commit England to a definitely Protestant policy than to guard against the real or supposed danger of a Catholic league against her. After their interview at Aigues Mortes, Charles V. and Francis appeared to be cordially allied and Henry to be in danger of complete isolation. The only way of escape seemed to be by an alliance with the opposition to Charles in Germany.

The suggestion that Henry VIII. carefully balanced the two parties in the council of regency, which he appointed by his will, cannot be substantiated; see Pollard, "Protector Somerset," where the whole question of Henry's will is discussed. The statute which gave to the proclamations of Henry VIII. the force of law was only intended to last for the lifetime of that king.

Section II.—The Martyrs, 1553—1558

[*Authorities.*—The Calendar of State Papers for this reign is very inadequate. Among chronicles may be mentioned Holinshed and the "Chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary" (Camden Society). Froude is the main modern authority; a defence of Mary may be found in Stone, "Mary I."]

Mary The waning health of Edward warned Warwick, who had now become Duke of Northumberland, of an unlooked-for danger. Mary, the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, who had been placed

next in the succession to Edward by her father's will, remained firm amidst all the changes of the time to the older faith; and her accession threatened to be the signal for its return. But the bigotry of the young King was easily brought to consent to a daring scheme by which her rights might be set aside. Edward's "plan," as Northumberland dictated it, annulled the will of his father; though the right of determining the succession had been entrusted to Henry by a Statute of the Realm. It set aside both Mary and Elizabeth, who stood next in the will, as bastards. With this exclusion of the direct line of Henry the Eighth the succession would vest, if the rules of hereditary descent were observed, in the descendants of his elder sister Margaret; who had become by her first husband, James the Fourth of Scotland, the grandmother of the young Scottish Queen, Mary Stuart; and, by a second marriage with the Earl of Angus, was the grandmother of Henry Stuart Lord Darnley. Margaret's descendants, however, were regarded as incapacitated by their exclusion from mention in Henry's will. The descendants of her sister Mary, the younger daughter of Henry the Seventh, by her marriage with Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, had been placed by the late King next in succession to his own children: and Mary's child Frances was still living, the mother of three daughters by her marriage with Lord Grey, who had been raised to the Dukedom of Suffolk. Frances however was passed over, and Edward's "plan" named her eldest child Jane as his successor. The marriage of Jane Grey with Guildford Dudley, the fourth son of Northumberland, was all that was needed to complete the unscrupulous plot. The consent of the judges and council to her succession was extorted by the violence of the Duke, and the new sovereign was proclaimed on Edward's death. But the temper of the whole people rebelled against so lawless a usurpation. The eastern counties rose as one man to support Mary; and when Northumberland marched from London with ten thousand at his back to crush the rising, the Londoners, Protestant as they were, showed their ill-will by a stubborn silence. "The people crowd to look upon us," the Duke noted gloomily, "but not one calls 'God speed ye.'" His courage suddenly gave way, and his retreat to Cambridge was the signal for a general defection. Northumberland himself threw his cap into the air and shouted with his men for Queen Mary. But his submission failed to avert his doom; and the death of Northumberland drew with it the imprisonment in the Tower of the innocent and hapless girl, whom he had made the tool of his ambition. The whole system which had been pursued during Edward's reign fell with a sudden crash. London alone remained true to Protestantism. Over all the rest of the country the tide of reaction swept without a check. The married priests were driven from their churches; the new Prayer-book was set aside; the Mass was restored with a burst of popular enthusiasm. The imprisoned bishops found themselves again in their sees; and Latimer and Cranmer, who were charged with a share in the usurpation, took their places in the Tower. But

1553 to 1559

1553

1553 to 1558 with the restoration of the system of Henry the Eighth the popular impulse was satisfied. The people had no more sympathy with Mary's leanings towards Rome than with the violence of the Protestants. The Parliament, while eager to restore the Mass and the laws against heresy, clung obstinately to the Church-lands and to the Royal Supremacy.

The Spanish Marriage Nor was England more favourable to the marriage on which, from motives both of policy and religious zeal, Mary had set her heart. The Emperor had ceased to be the object of hope or confidence as a mediator who would at once purify the Church from abuses and restore the unity of Christendom: he had ranged himself definitely on the side of the Papacy and of the Council of Trent; and the cruelties of the Inquisition, which he introduced into Flanders, gave a terrible indication of the bigotry which he was to bequeath to his house. The marriage with his son Philip, whose hand he offered to his cousin Mary, meant an absolute submission to the Papacy, and the undoing not only of the Protestant reformation, but of the more moderate reforms of the New Learning. On the other hand, it offered the political advantage of securing Mary's throne against the pretensions of the young Queen of Scots, Mary Stuart, who had become formidable by her marriage with the heir of the French crown; and whose adherents already alleged the illegitimate birth of both Mary and Elizabeth, through the annulling of their mothers' marriages, as a ground for denying their right of succession. To the issue of the marriage he proposed, Charles promised the heritage of the Low Countries, while he accepted the demand made by Mary's minister, Bishop Gardiner of Winchester, of complete independence both of policy and action on the part of England, in case of such a union. The temptation was great, and Mary's passion overleapt all obstacles. But in 1554 spite of the toleration which she had promised, and had as yet observed, the announcement of her design drove the Protestants into a panic of despair. The Duke of Suffolk suddenly appeared at Leicester, and proclaimed his daughter Queen; but the rising proved a failure. The danger was far more formidable when the dread that Spaniards were coming "to conquer the realm" roused Kent into revolt under Sir Thomas Wyatt, the bravest and most accomplished Englishman of his day. The ships in the Thames submitted to be seized by the insurgents. The trainbands of London, who marched under the Duke of Norfolk against them, deserted to the rebels in a mass with shouts of "a Wyatt! a Wyatt! we are all Englishmen!" Had the insurgents moved quickly on the capital, its gates would at once have been flung open, and success would have been assured. But in the critical moment Mary was saved by her queenly courage. Riding boldly to the Guildhall she appealed, with "a man's voice," to the loyalty of the citizens, and when Wyatt appeared on the Southwark bank the bridge was secured. The issue hung on the question, which side London would take; and the insurgent leader pushed desperately

up the Thames, seized the bridge at Kingston, threw his force across the river, and marched rapidly back on the capital. The night march along miry roads wearied and disorganized his men, the bulk of whom were cut off from their leader by a Royal force which had gathered in the fields at what is now Hyde Park Corner, but Wyatt himself, with a handful of followers, pushed desperately on to Temple Bar. "I have kept touch," he cried as he sank exhausted at the gate; but it was closed, and his adherents within were powerless to effect their promised diversion in his favour. 1553 to 1558

The courage of the Queen, who had refused to fly even while the rebels were marching beneath her palace walls, was only equalled by her terrible revenge. The hour was come when the Protestants were at her feet, and she struck without mercy. Lady Jane, her father, and her uncles atoned for the ambition of the House of Suffolk by the death of traitors. Wyatt and his chief adherents followed them to the block, while the bodies of the poorer insurgents were dangling on gibbets throughout Kent. Elizabeth, who had with some reason been suspected of complicity in the insurrection, was sent to the Tower; and only saved from death by the interposition of the Emperor and of the Council. But the failure of the revolt not only crushed the Protestant party, it secured the marriage on which Mary was resolved. She used it to wring a reluctant consent from the Parliament, and meeting Philip at Winchester in the ensuing summer became his wife. The temporizing measures to which the Queen had been forced by the earlier difficulties of her reign could now be laid safely aside. Mary was resolved to bring about a submission to Rome; and her minister Gardiner, who, as the moderate party which had supported the policy of Henry the Eighth saw its hopes disappear, ranged himself definitely on the side of a unity which could now only be brought about by reconciliation with the Papacy on its own terms, was, if less religiously zealous, politically as resolute as herself. The Spanish match was hardly concluded, when the negotiations with Rome were brought to a final issue. The attainder of Reginald Pole, who had been appointed by the Pope to receive the submission of the realm, was reversed; and the Legate, who entered London by the river with his cross gleaming from the prow of his barge, was solemnly welcomed in full Parliament. The two Houses decided by a formal vote to return to the obedience of the Papal See, and received on their knees the absolution which freed the realm from the guilt incurred by its schism and heresy. But, even in the hour of her triumph, the temper both of Parliament and the nation warned the Queen of the failure of her hope to bind England to the purely Catholic policy of Spain. The growing independence of the two Houses was seen in their rejection of measure after measure proposed by the Crown. In spite of Mary's hatred of Elizabeth, they refused to change the order of succession in favour of Philip. Though their great Bill of Reconciliation repealed the whole ecclesiastical legislation of Henry the Eighth and his

The Submission to Rome

1553 to 1558

successor, they rejected all proposals for the restoration of Church-lands to the clergy. Though the Protestant revolt brought about a revival of the Statute of Heretics, a bill for the restoration of the jurisdiction of the bishops was again rejected by Parliament. Nor was the temper of the nation at large less decided. The sullen discontent of London compelled its bishop, Bonner, to withdraw the inquisitorial articles by which he hoped to purge his diocese of heresy. Even the Royal Council was divided, and in the very interests of Catholicism the Emperor himself counselled prudence and delay. But whether from without or from within, warning was wasted on the fierce bigotry of the Queen.

Rowland Taylor 1555

It was a moment when the prospects of the party of reform seemed utterly hopeless. Spain had taken openly the lead in the great Catholic movement, and England was being dragged, however reluctantly, by the Spanish marriage into the current of reaction. Its opponents were broken by the failure of their revolt, and unpopular through the memory of their violence and greed. But the cause which prosperity had ruined revived in the dark hour of persecution. If the Protestants had not known how to govern, they knew how to die. The story of Rowland Taylor, the Vicar of Hadleigh, tells us more of the work which was now begun, and of the effect it was likely to produce, than pages of historic dissertation. Now that Parliament had revived the Statute of Heresy it was no longer needful to fall back on the powers of the Common Law; and Gardiner, at the head of the Council, pressed busily on the work of death. Taylor, who as a man of mark had been one of the first victims chosen for execution, was arrested in London and condemned to suffer in his own parish. His wife, "suspecting that her husband should that night be carried away," had waited through the darkness with her children in the porch of St. Botolph's beside Aldgate. "Now when the sheriff his company came against St. Botolph's Church, Elizabeth cried, saying, 'O my dear father! Mother! mother! here is my father led away!' Then cried his wife, 'Rowland, Rowland, where art thou?'—for it was a very dark morning, that the one could not see the other. Dr. Taylor answered, 'I am here, dear wife,' and stayed. The sheriff's men would have led him forth, but the sheriff said, 'Stay a little, masters, I pray you, and let him speak to his wife.' Then came she to him, and he took his daughter Mary in his arms, and he and his wife and Elizabeth knelt down and said the Lord's prayer. At which sight the sheriff wept apace, and so did divers others of the company. After they had prayed he rose up and kissed his wife and shook her by the hand, and said, 'Farewell, my dear wife, be of good comfort, for I am quiet in my conscience! God shall still be a father to my children.' . . . Then said his wife, 'God go with thee, dear Rowland! I will, with God's grace, meet thee at Hadleigh.' . . . All the way Dr. Taylor was merry and cheerful as one that accounted himself going to a most pleasant banquet or bridal. . . . Coming within

two miles of Hadleigh he desired to light off his horse, which done he leaped and set a frisk or twain as men commonly do for dancing. 'Why, master Doctor,' quoth the Sheriff, 'how do you now?' He answered, 'Well, God be praised, Master Sheriff, never better; for now I know I am almost at home. I lack not past two stiles to go over, and I am even at my Father's house!' . . . The streets of Hadleigh were beset on both sides with men and women of the town and country who waited to see him; whom when they beheld so led to death, with weeping eyes and lamentable voices, they cried, 'Ah, good Lord! there goeth our good shepherd from us!'" The journey was at last over. "'What place is this,' he asked, 'and what meaneth it that so much people are gathered together?' It was answered, 'It is Oldham Common, the place where you must suffer, and the people are come to look upon you.' Then said he, 'Thanked be God, I am even at home!' . . . But when the people saw his reverend and ancient face, with a long white beard, they burst out with weeping tears and cried, saying, 'God save thee, good Dr. Taylor; God strengthen thee and help thee; the Holy Ghost comfort thee!' He wished, but was not suffered, to speak. When he had prayed, he went to the stake and kissed it, and set himself into a pitch-barrel which they had set for him to stand on, and so stood with his back upright against the stake, with his hands folded together and his eyes towards heaven, and so let himself be burned." One of the executioners "cruelly cast a fagot at him, which hit upon his head and brake his face that the blood ran down his visage. Then said Dr. Taylor, 'O friend, I have harm enough—what needed that?'" One more act of brutality brought his sufferings to an end.—"So stood he still without either crying or moving, with his hands folded together, till Soyce with a halberd struck him on the head that the brains fell out, and the dead corpse fell down into the fire." 1553 to 1558

The terror of death was powerless against men like these. Bonner, the Bishop of London, to whom, as bishop of the diocese in which the Council sate, its victims were generally delivered for execution, but who, in spite of the nickname and hatred which his official prominence in the work of death earned him, seems to have been naturally a good-humoured and merciful man, asked a youth who was brought before him whether he thought he could bear the fire. The boy at once held his hand without flinching in the flame of a candle which stood by. Rogers, a fellow-worker with Tyndale in the translation of the Bible, and one of the foremost among the Protestant preachers, died bathing his hands in the flame "as if it had been in cold water." Even the commonest lives gleamed for a moment into poetry at the stake. "Pray for me," a boy, William Brown, who had been brought home to Brentwood to suffer, asked of the bystanders round. "I will pray no more for thee," one of them replied, "than I will pray for a dog." "'Then,' said William, 'Son of God, shine upon me;' and immediately the sun in the elements shone out of a dark cloud The Martyrs

1553 to 1558

so full in his face that he was constrained to look another way; whereat the people mused, because it was so dark a little time before." The work of terror failed in the very ends for which it was wrought. The panic, which had driven a host of Protestants over sea to find refuge at Strasburg or Geneva, soon passed away. The old spirit of insolent defiance, of outrageous violence, was roused again at the challenge of persecution. A Protestant hung a string of puddings round a priest's neck in derision of his beads. The restored images were grossly insulted. The old scurrilous ballads were heard again in the streets. One miserable wretch, driven to frenzy, stabbed the priest of St. Margaret's as he stood with the chalice in his hand. It was a more formidable sign of the times that acts of violence such as these no longer stirred the people at large to their former resentment. The horror of the persecution left no room for other feelings. Every death at the stake won hundreds to the cause of its victims. "You have lost the hearts of twenty thousands that were rank Papists," ran a letter to Bonner, "within these twelve months." Bonner indeed, never very zealous in the cause, was sick of his work. Gardiner was dead, and the energy of the bishops quietly relaxed. But Mary had no thought of hesitation in the cause she had begun. "Rattling letters" from the Queen roused the lagging prelates to fresh persecution, and in three months fifty victims were hurried to their doom. It was resolved to bring the chiefs of the Protestant party to the stake. Two prelates had already perished; Hooper, the Bishop of Glocester, had been burnt in his own Cathedral city; Ferrars, the Bishop of St. David's, had suffered at Caermarthen. Latimer and Bishop Ridley of London were now drawn from their prisons at Oxford. "Play the man, Master Ridley," cried the old preacher of the Reformation as the flames shot up around him; "we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out." One victim remained, far beneath many who had preceded him in character, but high above them in his position in the Church of England. The other prelates who had suffered had been created after the separation from Rome and were hardly regarded as bishops by their opponents. But, whatever had been his part in the schism, Cranmer had received his Pallium from the Pope. He was, in the eyes of all, Archbishop of Canterbury, the successor of St. Augustine and of St. Thomas in the second see of Western Christendom. To burn the Primate of the English Church for heresy was to shut out meaner victims from all hope of escape. But revenge and religious zeal alike urged Mary to bring Cranmer to the stake. First among the many decisions in which the Archbishop had prostituted justice to Henry's will stood that by which he had annulled the King's marriage with Catherine and declared Mary a bastard. The last of his political acts had been to join, whether reluctantly or no, in the shameless plot to exclude Mary from the throne. His great position, too, made him more than any man the representative of

the religious revolution which had passed over the land. His figure stood with those of Henry and of Cromwell on the frontispiece of the English Bible. The decisive change which had been given to the character of the Reformation under Edward was due wholly to Cranmer. It was his voice that men heard and still hear in the accents of the English Liturgy, which he compiled in the quiet retirement of Otford. As an Archbishop, Cranmer's judgment rested with no meaner tribunal than that of Rome, and his execution was necessarily delayed. But the courage which he had shown since the accession of Mary gave way the moment his final sentence was announced. The moral cowardice, which had displayed itself in his miserable compliance with the lust and despotism of Henry, displayed itself again in the six recantations by which he hoped to purchase pardon. But pardon was impossible; and Cranmer's strangely mingled nature found a power in its very weakness when he was brought into the church of St. Mary to repeat his recantation on the way to the stake. "Now," ended his address to the hushed congregation before him, "now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that ever I said or did in my life, and that is the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth; which here I now renounce and refuse as things written by my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death to save my life, if it might be. And, forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand therefore shall be the first punished; for if I come to the fire, it shall be the first burnt." "This was the hand that wrote it," he again exclaimed at the stake, "therefore it shall suffer first punishment;" and holding it steadily in the flame "he never stirred nor cried" till life was gone.

1553 to 1558

1556

It was with the unerring instinct of a popular movement that, among a crowd of far more heroic sufferers, the Protestants fixed, in spite of his recantations, on the martyrdom of Cranmer as the death-blow to Catholicism in England. For one man who felt within him the joy of Rowland Taylor at the prospect of the stake, there were thousands who felt the shuddering dread of Cranmer. The triumphant cry of Latimer could reach only hearts as bold as his own; but the sad pathos of the Primate's humiliation and repentance struck chords of sympathy and pity in the hearts of all. It is from that moment that we may trace the bitter remembrance of the blood shed in the cause of Rome; which, however partial and unjust it must seem to an historic observer, still lies graven deep in the temper of the English people. The failure of any attempt to make England really useful to the Catholic cause became clear even to the bigoted Philip; and on the disappearance of all hope of a child, he left the country, in spite of Mary's passionate entreaties. But though as hopeless as Philip, the Queen struggled desperately on. In the face of the Parliament's refusal to restore the confiscated Church-lands, she did her best to undo Henry's work. She refounded all she could of the abbeys which

The Death of Mary

1553 to 1558 had been suppressed. She refused the first-fruits of the clergy. Above all, she pressed on the work of persecution. It had sunk now from bishops and priests to the people itself. The sufferers were sent in batches to the flames. In a single day thirteen victims, two of them women, were burnt at Stratford-le-Bow. Seventy-three Protestants of Colchester were dragged through the streets of London, tied to a single rope. A new commission for the suppression of heresy was exempted by royal authority from all restrictions of law which fettered its activity. The Universities were visited; and the corpses of the foreign teachers who had found a resting place there under Edward—Bucer, Fagius, and Peter Martyr—were torn from their graves and reduced to ashes. The penalties of martial law were threatened against the possessors of heretical books issued from Geneva; the treasonable contents of which indeed, and their constant exhortations to rebellion and civil war, justly called for stern repression. But the loyalty which had seated Mary on the throne was fast dying away; and petty insurrections showed the revulsion of popular feeling. Open sympathy began to be shown to the sufferers for conscience' sake. In the three years of the persecution three hundred victims had perished at the stake. The people sickened at the work of death. The crowd round the fire at Smithfield shouted "Amen" to the prayer of seven martyrs whom Bonner had condemned, and prayed in its turn, that "God would strengthen them." Disease and famine quickened the general discontent which was roused when, in spite of the pledges given at her marriage, Mary dragged England into a war to support Philip—who on the Emperor's resignation had succeeded to his dominions of Spain, Flanders,
1558 and the New World—in a struggle against France. The war had hardly begun when, with characteristic secrecy and energy, the Duke of Guise flung himself upon Calais, and compelled it to surrender before succour could arrive. "The brightest jewel in the English crown," as all then held it to be, was suddenly reft away; and the surrender of Guisnes, which soon followed, left England without a foot of land on the Continent. But so profound was the discontent that even this blow failed to rally the country round the Queen. The forced loan to which she resorted came in
Nov. 17, 1558 slowly. The levies mutinied and dispersed. The death of Mary alone averted a general revolt, and a burst of enthusiastic joy hailed the accession of Elizabeth.

Gardiner is not to be regarded as a vigorous persecutor; no Protestants were burned in his diocese of Winchester. Mary's chief supporter in the work of persecution was Pole.

Section III.—Elizabeth, 1558—1560

1558 to 1560

[*Authorities.*—The Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, is meagre; the Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, is full and invaluable. The chief documents of the reign are collected in Prothero, "Statutes and Constitutional Documents," with a splendid introduction. Camden, "Annales regnante Elizabetha," is strictly contemporary; various diaries, Machyn, Walsingham, etc., throw light upon portions of the period; see also Pollard, "Tudor Tracts" and the "Somers Tracts." D'Ewes' "Journals of all the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth" is of great value. Among modern works may be mentioned such lives of Elizabeth as that by Creighton; Nares, "Life of Lord Burleigh," with Macaulay's essay; Hume, "Courtships of Queen Elizabeth," and the chapters in the "Cambridge Modern History." Froude has left the most brilliant account of the period from Elizabeth's accession to the defeat of the Armada.]

Elizabeth

Never had the fortunes of England sunk to a lower ebb than at the moment when Elizabeth mounted the throne. The country was humiliated by defeat, and brought to the verge of rebellion by the bloodshed and misgovernment of Mary's reign. The old social discontent, trampled down for a time by the mercenary troops of Somerset, still remained a perpetual menace to public order. The religious strife had passed beyond hope of reconciliation, now that the Reformers were parted from their opponents by the fires of Smithfield, and the party of the New Learning all but dissolved. The Catholics were bound helplessly to Rome. Protestantism, burnt at home and hurled into exile abroad, had become a fiercer thing; and was pouring back from Geneva with dreams of revolutionary change in Church and State. England, dragged at the heels of Philip into a useless and ruinous war, was left without an ally save Spain; while France, mistress of Calais, became mistress of the Channel. Not only was Scotland a standing danger in the north, through the French marriage of Mary Stuart and its consequent bondage to French policy; but its Queen had assumed the style and arms of an English sovereign, and threatened to rouse every Catholic throughout the realm against Elizabeth's title. In presence of this host of dangers the country lay utterly helpless, without army or fleet, or the means of manning one; for the treasury, already drained by the waste of Edward's reign, had been utterly exhausted by Mary's restoration of the Church-lands, and by the cost of her war with France.

England's one hope lay in the character of her Queen. Elizabeth was now in her twenty-fifth year. Personally she had much of her mother's beauty; her figure was commanding, her face long, but queenly and intelligent, her eyes quick and fine. She had grown up amidst the liberal culture of Henry's Court a bold horsewoman, a good shot, a graceful dancer, a skilled musician, and an accomplished scholar. She read every morning a portion of Demosthenes, and could "rub up her rusty Greek" at need to bandy pedantry with a Vice-Chancellor. But she was far from being a mere pedant.

1558

1558 to 1560

The new literature which was springing up around her found constant welcome in her Court. She spoke Italian and French as fluently as her mother tongue. She was familiar with Ariosto and Tasso. In spite of the affectation of her style, and her taste for anagrams and puerilities, she listened with delight to the "Faery Queen," and found a smile for "Master Spenser" when he appeared in the presence. Her moral temper recalled in its strange contrasts the mixed blood within her veins. She was at once the daughter of Henry and of Anne Boleyn. From her father she inherited her frank and hearty address, her love of popularity and of free intercourse with the people, her dauntless courage, and her amazing self-confidence. Her harsh manlike voice, her impetuous will, her pride, her furious outbursts of anger came to her with her Tudor blood. She rated great nobles as if they were schoolboys; she met the insolence of Essex with a box on the ear; she would break, now and then, into the gravest deliberations to swear at her ministers like a fishwife. But strangely in contrast with the violent outlines of her Tudor temper stood the sensuous, self-indulgent nature she derived from Anne Boleyn. Splendour and pleasure were with Elizabeth the very air she breathed. Her delight was to move in perpetual progresses from castle to castle through a series of gorgeous pageants, fanciful and extravagant as a Caliph's dream. She loved gaiety and laughter and wit. A happy retort or a finished compliment never failed to win her favour. She hoarded jewels. Her dresses were innumerable. Her vanity remained, even to old age, the vanity of a coquette in her teens. No adulation was too fulsome for her, no flattery of her beauty too gross. "To see her was heaven," Hatton told her, "the lack of her was hell." She would play with her rings that her courtiers might note the delicacy of her hands; or dance a coranto, that the French ambassador, hidden dexterously behind a curtain, might report her sprightliness to his master. Her levity, her frivolous laughter, her unwomanly jests gave colour to a thousand scandals. Her character, in fact, like her portraits, was utterly without shade. Of womanly reserve or self-restraint she knew nothing. No instinct of delicacy veiled the voluptuous temper which had broken out in the romps of her girlhood, and showed itself almost ostentatiously throughout her later life. Personal beauty in a man was a sure passport to her liking. She patted handsome young squires on the neck when they knelt to kiss her hand, and fondled her "sweet Robin," Lord Leicester, in the face of the Court.

It was no wonder that the statesmen whom she outwitted held Elizabeth almost to the last to be little more than a frivolous woman; or that Philip of Spain wondered how "a wanton" could hold in check the policy of the Escurial. But the Elizabeth whom they saw was far from being all of Elizabeth. The wilfulness of Henry, the triviality of Anne Boleyn played over the surface of a nature hard as steel, a temper purely intellectual, the very type of reason untouched by imagination or passion. Luxurious and

pleasure-loving as she seemed, Elizabeth lived simply and frugally, and she worked hard. Her vanity and caprice had no weight whatever with her in state affairs. The coquette of the presence chamber became the coolest and hardest of politicians at the council board. Fresh from the flattery of her courtiers, she would tolerate no flattery in the closet; she was herself plain and downright of speech with her counsellors, and she looked for a corresponding plainness of speech in return. Her expenditure was parsimonious and even miserly. If any trace of her sex lingered in her actual statesmanship, it was seen in the simplicity and tenacity of purpose that often underlies a woman's fluctuations of feeling. It was this in part which gave her her marked superiority over the statesmen of her time. No nobler group of ministers ever gathered round a council board than those who gathered round the council board of Elizabeth. But she is the instrument of none. She listens, she weighs, she uses or puts by the counsels of each in turn, but her policy as a whole is her own. It was a policy, not of genius, but of good sense. Her aims were simple and obvious: to preserve her throne, to keep England out of war, to restore civil and religious order. Something of womanly caution and timidity, perhaps, backed the passionless indifference with which she set aside the larger schemes of ambition which were ever opening before her eyes. She was resolute in her refusal of the Low Countries. She rejected with a laugh the offers of the Protestants to make her "head of the Religion" and "mistress of the Seas." But her amazing success in the end sprang mainly from this wise limitation of her aims. She had a finer sense than any of her counsellors of her real resources; she knew instinctively how far she could go, and what she could do. Her cold, critical intellect was never swayed by enthusiasm or by panic either to exaggerate or to under-estimate her risks or her power. 1558 to 1560

Of political wisdom, indeed, in its larger and more generous sense, Elizabeth had little or none; but her political tact was unerring. She seldom saw her course at a glance, but she played with a hundred courses, fitfully and discursively, as a musician runs his fingers over the key-board, till she hit suddenly upon the right one. Such a nature was essentially practical and of the present. She distrusted a plan, in fact, just in proportion to its speculative range, or its outlook into the future. Her notion of statesmanship lay in watching how things turned out around her, and in seizing the moment for making the best of them. A policy of this limited, practical, tentative order was not only best suited to the England of her day, to its small resources and the transitional character of its religious and political belief, but it was one eminently suited to Elizabeth's peculiar powers. It was a policy of detail, and in details her wonderful readiness and ingenuity found scope for their exercise. "No War, my Lords," the Queen used to cry imperiously at the council board, "No War!" but her hatred of war sprang less from aversion to blood or to expense,

1558 to 1560

real as was her aversion to both, than from the fact that peace left the field open to the diplomatic manœuvres and intrigues in which she excelled. It was her delight in the consciousness of her ingenuity which broke out in a thousand puckish freaks, freaks in which one can hardly see any purpose beyond the purpose of sheer mystification. She revelled in "bye-ways" and "crooked ways." She played with grave cabinets as a cat plays with a mouse, and with much of the same feline delight in the mere embarrassment of her victims. When she was weary of mystifying foreign statesmen she turned to find fresh sport in mystifying her own ministers. Had Elizabeth written the story of her reign she would have prided herself, not on the triumph of England or the ruin of Spain, but on the skill with which she had hoodwinked and outwitted every statesman in Europe during fifty years. Nor was her trickery without political value. Ignoble, inexpressibly wearisome as the Queen's diplomacy seems to us now, tracing it as we do through a thousand despatches, it succeeded in its main end. It gained time, and every year that was gained doubled Elizabeth's strength. Nothing is more revolting in the Queen, but nothing is more characteristic, than her shameless mendacity. It was an age of political lying, but in the profusion and recklessness of her lies Elizabeth stood without a peer in Christendom. A falsehood was to her simply an intellectual means of meeting a difficulty; and the ease with which she asserted or denied whatever suited her purpose was only equalled by the cynical indifference with which she met the exposure of her lies as soon as their purpose was answered. The same purely intellectual view of things showed itself in the dexterous use she made of her very faults. Her levity carried her gaily over moments of detection and embarrassment where better women would have died of shame. She screened her tentative and hesitating statesmanship under the natural timidity and vacillation of her sex. She turned her very luxury and sports to good account. There were moments of grave danger in her reign when the country remained indifferent to its perils, as it saw the Queen give her days to hawking and hunting, and her nights to dancing and plays. Her vanity and affectation, her womanly fickleness and caprice, all had their part in the diplomatic comedies she played with the successive candidates for her hand. If political necessities made her life a lonely one, she had at any rate the satisfaction of averting war and conspiracies by love sonnets and romantic interviews, or of gaining a year of tranquillity by the dexterous spinning out of a flirtation.

As we track Elizabeth through her tortuous mazes of lying and intrigue, the sense of her greatness is almost lost in a sense of contempt. But, wrapt as they were in a cloud of mystery, the aims of her policy were throughout temperate and simple, and they were pursued with a singular tenacity. The sudden acts of energy which from time to time broke her habitual hesitation proved that it was no hesitation of weakness. Elizabeth could wait and finesse; but

1558 to 1560

when the hour was come she could strike, and strike hard. Her natural temper, indeed, tended to a rash self-confidence rather than to self-distrust. She had, as strong natures always have, an unbounded confidence in her luck. "Her Majesty counts much on Fortune," Walsingham wrote bitterly; "I wish she would trust more in Almighty God." The diplomatists who censured at one moment her irresolution, her delay, her changes of front, censured at the next her "obstinacy," her iron will, her defiance of what seemed to them inevitable ruin. "This woman," Philip's envoy wrote after a wasted remonstrance,—"this woman is possessed by a hundred thousand devils." To her own subjects, indeed, who knew nothing of her manœuvres and retreats, of her "bye-ways" and "crooked ways," she seemed the embodiment of dauntless resolution. Brave as they were, the men who swept the Spanish main or glided between the icebergs of Baffin's Bay never doubted that the palm of bravery lay with their Queen. Her steadiness and courage in the pursuit of her aims was equalled by the wisdom with which she chose the men to accomplish them. She had a quick eye for merit of any sort, and a wonderful power of enlisting its whole energy in her service. None of our sovereigns ever gathered such a group of advisers to their council board as gathered round the council board of Elizabeth, but the sagacity which chose Burleigh and Walsingham was just as unerring in its choice of the meanest of her agents. Her success, indeed, in securing from the beginning of her reign to its end, with the single exception of Leicester, precisely the right men for the work she set them to do, sprang in great measure from the noblest characteristic of her intellect. If in loftiness of aim her temper fell below many of the tempers of her time, in the breadth of its range, in the universality of its sympathy it stood far above them all. Elizabeth could talk poetry with Spenser and philosophy with Bruno; she could discuss Euphuism with Lyly, and enjoy the chivalry of Essex; she could turn from talk of the last fashions to pore with Cecil over despatches and treasury books; she could pass from tracking traitors with Walsingham to settle points of doctrine with Parker, or to calculate with Frobisher the chances of a north-west passage to the Indies. The versatility and many-sidedness of her mind enabled her to understand every phase of the intellectual movement of her day, and to fix by a sort of instinct on its higher representatives. But the greatness of the Queen rests above all on her power over her people. We have had grander and nobler rulers, but none so popular as Elizabeth. The passion of love, of loyalty, of admiration which finds its most perfect expression in the "Faery Queen," throbbed as intensely through the veins of her meanest subjects. To England, during her reign of half a century, she was a virgin and a Protestant Queen; and her immorality, her absolute want of religious enthusiasm, failed utterly to blur the brightness of the national ideal. Her worst acts broke fruitlessly against the general devotion. A Puritan, whose hand she hacked off in a freak of

1558 to 1560

tyrannous resentment, waved the stump round his head, and shouted "God save Queen Elizabeth." Of her faults, indeed, England beyond the circle of her court knew little or nothing. The shiftings of her diplomacy were never seen outside the Royal closet. The nation at large could only judge her foreign policy by its main outlines, by its temperance and good sense, and, above all, by its success. But every Englishman was able to judge Elizabeth in her rule at home, in her love of peace, her instinct of order, the firmness and moderation of her government, the judicious spirit of conciliation and compromise among warring factions, which gave the country an unexampled tranquillity at a time when almost every other country in Europe was torn with civil war. Every sign of the growing prosperity, the sight of London as it became the mart of the world, of stately mansions as they rose on every manor, told, and justly told, in Elizabeth's favour. In one act of her civil administration she showed the boldness and originality of a great ruler; for the opening of her reign saw her face the social difficulty which had so long impeded English progress, by the issue of a commission of inquiry which ended in the solution of the problem by the system of poor-laws. For commerce indeed laws could do little; and Elizabeth's active interference hindered rather than furthered its advance; but the interference was for the most part well meant, and her statue in the centre of the London Exchange was a tribute on the part of the merchant-class to the interest with which she watched, and shared personally in, its enterprises. Her thrift won a general gratitude. The memories of the Terror and of the Martyrs threw into bright relief the aversion from bloodshed which was conspicuous in her earlier reign, and never wholly wanting through its fiercer close. Above all, there was a general confidence in her instinctive knowledge of the national temper. Her finger was always on the public pulse. She knew exactly when she could resist the feeling of her people, and when she must give way before the new sentiment of freedom which her policy had unconsciously fostered. But when she retreated, her defeat had all the grace of victory; and the frankness and unreserve of her surrender won back at once the love that her resistance had lost. Her attitude at home, in fact, was that of a woman whose pride in the well-being of her subjects, and whose longing for their favour, was the one warm touch in the coldness of her natural temper. If Elizabeth could be said to love anything, she loved England. "Nothing," she said to her first Parliament in words of unwonted fire, "nothing, no worldly thing under the sun, is so dear to me as the love and good-will of my subjects." And the love and good-will which were so dear to her she fully won.

She clung perhaps to her popularity the more passionately that it hid in some measure from her the terrible loneliness of her life. She was the last of the Tudors, the last of Henry's children; and her nearest relatives were Mary Stuart and the House of Suffolk.

one the avowed, the other the secret claimant of her throne. Among her mother's kindred she found but a single cousin. Whatever womanly tenderness she had, wrapt itself around Leicester; but a marriage with Leicester was impossible, and every other union, could she even have bent to one, was denied to her by the political difficulties of her position. The one cry of bitterness which burst from Elizabeth revealed her terrible sense of the solitude of her life. "The Queen of Scots," she cried at the birth of James, "has a fair son, and I am but a barren stock." But the loneliness of her position only reflected the loneliness of her nature. She stood utterly apart from the world around her, sometimes above it, sometimes below it, but never of it. It was only on her intellectual side that Elizabeth touched the England of her day. All its moral aspects were simply dead to her. It was a time when men were being lifted into nobleness by the new moral energy which seemed suddenly to pulse through the whole people; when honour and enthusiasm took colours of poetic beauty, and religion became a chivalry. But the finer sentiments of the men around her touched Elizabeth simply as the fair tints of a picture would have touched her. She made her market with equal indifference out of the heroism of William of Orange or the bigotry of Philip. The noblest aims and lives were only counters on her board. She was the one soul in her realm whom the news of St. Bartholomew stirred to no lasting thirst for vengeance; and while England was thrilling with its triumph over the Armada, its Queen was coolly grumbling over the cost, and making her profit out of the spoilt provisions she had ordered for the fleet that saved her. To the voice of gratitude, indeed, she was absolutely deaf. She accepted service, such as never was rendered to an English sovereign, without a thought of return. Walsingham spent his fortune in saving her life and her throne, and she left him to die a beggar. Whatever odium or loss her manœuvres incurred she flung upon her councillors. To screen her part in Mary's death she called on Davison to perish broken-hearted in the Tower. But as if by a strange irony, it was to this very want of sympathy that she owed some of the grander features of her character. If she was without love, she was without hate. She cherished no petty resentments; she never stooped to envy or suspicion of the men who served her. She was indifferent to abuse. Her good-humour was never ruffled by the charges of wantonness and cruelty with which the Jesuits filled every court in Europe. She was insensible to fear. Her life became at last the mark for assassin after assassin, but the thought of peril was the one hardest to bring home to her. Even when the Catholic plots broke out in her very household, she would listen to no proposals for the removal of Catholics from her court.

1558 to 1560

Elizabeth and the Church

It was this moral isolation which told so strangely both for good and for evil on her policy towards the Church. No woman ever lived who was so totally destitute of the sentiment of religion. While the world around her was being swayed more and more by

1558 to 1560 theological beliefs and controversies, Elizabeth was absolutely untouched by them. She was a child of the Italian Renascence rather than of the New Learning of Colet or Erasmus, and her attitude towards the enthusiasm of her time was that of Lorenzo de' Medici towards Savonarola. Her mind was unruffled by the spiritual problems which were vexing the minds around her; to Elizabeth, indeed, they were not only unintelligible, they were a little ridiculous. She had the same intellectual contempt for the coarser superstition of the Romanist as for the bigotry of the Protestant. She ordered images to be flung into the fire, and quizzed the Puritans as "brethren in Christ." But she had no sort of religious aversion for either Puritan or Papist. The Protestants grumbled at the Catholic nobles whom she admitted to the presence. The Catholics grumbled at the Protestant statesmen whom she called to her council board. But to Elizabeth the arrangement was the most natural thing in the world. She looked at theological differences in a purely political light. She agreed with Henry the Fourth that a kingdom was well worth a mass. It seemed an obvious thing to her to hold out hopes of conversion as a means of deceiving Philip, or to gain a point in negotiation by restoring the crucifix to her chapel. The first interest in her own mind was the interest of public order, and she never could understand how it could fail to be first in everyone's mind. Her ingenuity set itself to construct a system in which ecclesiastical unity should not jar against the rights of conscience; a compromise which merely required outer "conformity" to the established worship while, as she was never weary of repeating, it "left opinion free." For this purpose she fell back from the very first on the system of Henry the Eighth. "I will do," she told the Spanish ambassador, "as my father did." She let the connexion with Rome drop quietly without any overt act of separation. The first work of her Parliament was to undo the work of Mary, to repeal the Statutes of Heresy, to dissolve the refounded monasteries, and to restore the Royal Supremacy. At her entry into London Elizabeth kissed the English Bible which the citizens presented
1559 to her, and promised "diligently to read therein." Further she had no personal wish to go. A third of the Council, and two-thirds of the people, were as opposed to any radical changes in religion as the Queen. Among the gentry the older and wealthier were on the conservative side, and only the younger and meaner on the other. But it was soon necessary to go further. If the Protestants were the less numerous, they were the abler and the more vigorous party; and the exiles who returned from Geneva brought with them a fiercer hatred of Catholicism. Transubstantiation and the Mass were identified with the fires of Smithfield, while Edward's Prayer-book was hallowed by the memories of the Martyrs. But, in her restoration of the English Prayer-book, some slight alterations made by Elizabeth in its language showed her wish to conciliate the Catholics as far as possible. She had no mind to commit herself

to the system of the Protectorate. She dropped the words "Head of the Church" from the Royal title. The forty-two Articles were left for some years in abeyance. If Elizabeth had had her will, she would have retained the celibacy of the clergy, and restored the use of crucifixes in the churches. But she was again foiled by the increased bitterness of the religious division. The London mob tore down the crosses in the streets. Her attempt to retain the crucifix fell dead before the fierce opposition of the Protestant clergy. On the other hand, the Marian bishops, with a single exception, discerned the Protestant drift of the changes she was making, and bore imprisonment and deprivation rather than accept them. But to the mass of the nation the compromise of Elizabeth seems to have been fairly acceptable. The whole of the clergy, save two hundred, submitted to the Act of Supremacy, and adopted the Prayer-book. No marked repugnance to the new worship was shown by the people at large; and Elizabeth was able to turn from questions of belief to the question of order. On one point in the treatment of the Church she was resolved to make no difference. To the end of her reign she remained as bold a plunderer of its wealth as either of her predecessors, and carved out rewards for her ministers from the Church-lands with a queenly disregard of the rights of property. Lord Burleigh built up the estate of the house of Cecil out of the demesnes of the see of Peterborough. The neighbourhood of Hatton Garden to Ely Place recalls the spoliation of another bishopric in favour of the Queen's sprightly chancellor. Her reply to the bishop's protest against this robbery showed what Elizabeth meant by her Ecclesiastical Supremacy. "Proud prelate," she wrote, "you know what you were before I made you what you are! If you do not immediately comply with my request, by God I will unfrock you." But she suffered no plunder save her own, and she was earnest for the restoration of order and decency in the outer arrangements of the Church. 1558 to 1560

Her selection of Parker, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, as her agent in its reorganization was probably dictated by the correspondence of his character with that of the Queen. Theologically the Primate was a moderate man, but he was resolute to restore order in the discipline and worship of the Church. The whole machinery of public religion had been thrown out of gear by the rapid and radical changes of the past two reigns. In some dioceses a third of the parishes were without clergymen. The churches themselves were falling into ruin. The majority of the parish priests were still Catholic in heart; in the north, indeed, they made little disguise of their reactionary tendencies. On the other hand, the Protestant minority among the clergy were already disgusting the people by their violence and greed. Chapters had begun to plunder their own estates by leases and fines and by felling timber. The marriages of the clergy were a perpetual scandal, a scandal which was increased when the gorgeous vestments of the old worship were cut up into gowns and bodices Parker

1558 to 1560 for the priests' wives. The new services became scenes of utter disorder, where the clergy wore what dress they pleased, and the communicant stood or sate as he liked; while the old altars were broken down and the communion-table was often a bare board upon trestles. The people, naturally enough, were found to be "utterly devoid of religion," and came to church "as to a May game." To the difficulties which Parker found in the temper of the Reformers and their opponents, new difficulties were added by the freaks of the Queen. If she had no convictions, she had tastes; and her taste revolted from the bareness of Protestant ritual, and above all from the marriage of priests. "Leave that alone," she shouted to Dean Nowell from the Royal closet as he denounced the use of images—"Stick to your text, Master Dean, leave that alone!" Parker however was firm in resisting the introduction of the crucifix or of celibacy, and Elizabeth showed her resentment at his firmness by an insult to his wife. Married ladies were addressed at this time as "Madam," unmarried ladies as "Mistress;" and when Mrs. Parker advanced at the close of a sumptuous entertainment at Lambeth to take leave of the Queen, Elizabeth feigned a momentary hesitation. "Madam," she said at last, "I may not call you, and Mistress I am loth to call you; however I thank you for your good cheer." But freaks of this sort had little real influence on the Queen's policy, or on the steady support which she gave to the Primate in his work of order. The vacant sees were filled for the most part with learned and able men; the plunder of the Church by the nobles was checked; and England was settling quietly down again in religious peace when a prohibition from Rome forbade the presence of Catholics at the new worship. The
1562 order was widely obeyed, and the obedience was accepted by Elizabeth as a direct act of defiance. Heavy "fines for recusancy," levied on all who absented themselves from church, became a constant source of supply to the Royal exchequer. Meanwhile Parker was labouring for a uniformity of faith and worship amongst
1563 the clergy. Of the forty-two articles enjoined by Edward, thirty-nine were restored as a standard of belief, and a commission was opened by the Queen's order at Lambeth, with the Primate at its head, to enforce the Act of Uniformity in all matters of public
1564 worship. At one critical moment the extreme Protestants took alarm, churchwardens in London refused to provide surplices, and for a time it was necessary to suspend the more recalcitrant ministers. But the work of the Commission was too clearly needed to be permanently resisted; the more extreme Protestants were suffered to preach by connivance; and throughout the Church at large some kind of decent order was restored.

Scotland The settlement of religion however was the least pressing of the cares which met Elizabeth as she mounted the throne. The country was drained by war; yet she could only free herself from war, and from the dependence on Spain which it involved, by acquiescing in
1559 the loss of Calais. But though peace was won by the sacrifice,

France remained openly hostile; the Dauphin and his wife, Mary Stuart, assumed the arms and style of King and Queen of England; and their pretensions became a source of immediate danger through the presence of a French army in Scotland. To understand, however, what had taken place there we must cursorily review the past history of the Northern Kingdom. From the moment when England finally abandoned the fruitless effort to subdue it, the story of Scotland had been a miserable one. Whatever peace might be concluded, a sleepless dread of the old danger from the South tied the country to an alliance with France, which dragged it into the vortex of the Hundred Years' War. But after the great defeat and capture of David in the field of Neville's Cross, the struggle died down on both sides into marauding forays and battles, like those of Otterburn and Homildon Hill, in which alternate victories were won by the feudal lords of the Scotch or English border. The ballad of "Chevy Chase" brings home to us the spirit of the contest, the daring and defiance which stirred Sidney's heart "like a trumpet," but its effect on the internal development of Scotland was utterly ruinous. The houses of Douglas and of March, which it raised into supremacy, only interrupted their strife with England to battle fiercely with one another or to coerce the King. The power of the Crown sank in fact into insignificance under the earlier sovereigns of the line of Stuart, which had succeeded to the throne on the extinction of the male line of Bruce. Invasions and civil feuds not only arrested, but even rolled back the national industry and prosperity. The country was a chaos of disorder and misrule, in which the peasant and the trader were the victims of feudal outrage. The Border became a lawless land, where robbery and violence reigned utterly without check. So pitiable seemed the state of the kingdom that the clans of the Highlands drew together at last to swoop upon it as a certain prey; but the common peril united the factions of the nobles, and the victory of Harlaw saved the Lowlands from the rule of the Celt. A great name at last broke the line of its worthless kings. Schooled by a long captivity in England, James the First returned to his realm to be the ablest of her rulers, as he was the first of her poets. In the twelve years of a short but wonderful reign, justice and order were restored for a while, the Parliament organized on the English model, the clans of the Highlands assailed in their own fastnesses and reduced to swear fealty to the "Saxon" king. He turned to assail the great houses, but feudal violence was still too strong for the hand of the law, and a band of ruffians who burst into the Royal chamber left the King lifeless with sixteen stabs in his body. The death of James was the signal for an open struggle for supremacy between the House of Douglas and the Crown, which lasted through half a century. Order, however, crept gradually in; the exile of the Douglases left the Scottish monarchs supreme in the Lowlands; while their dominion over the Highlands was secured by the ruin of the Lords of the Isles. The fatal contest with England ceased

1558 to 1560

1388

1402

1411

1424

1436

1558 to 1560

with the accession of the House of Tudor; and the policy of Henry the Seventh bound for a time the two kingdoms together by bestowing the hand of his daughter Margaret on the Scottish king. The union was soon dissolved however by his son's claims of supremacy,

1513

and by the intrigues of Wolsey; war broke out anew, and the terrible defeat and death of James the Fourth at Flodden Field involved his realm in the turbulence and misrule of a minority. The actual reign of his successor, James the Fifth, had hardly begun, when his sympathies with the English Catholics aided the ambition of Somerset in plunging the two countries into a fresh

1542

struggle. His defeat at Solway Moss brought the young King broken-hearted to his grave. "It came with a lass and it will go with a lass," he cried, as they brought him on his death-bed the news of Mary Stuart's birth. The hand of his infant successor at once became the subject of rivalry between England and France. Had Mary, as Somerset desired, been wedded to Edward the Sixth, the whole destinies of Europe might have been changed by the union of the two realms; but the recent bloodshed had embittered Scotland, and the high-handed way in which the English statesmen pushed their marriage project completed the breach. Somerset's invasion and victory at Pinkie Cleugh only enabled Mary of Guise, the French wife of James the Fifth, who had become Regent of the realm at his death, to induce the Scotch estates to consent to the union of her child with the heir of the French crown, the Dauphin Francis. From that moment, as we have seen, the claims of the Scottish Queen on the English throne became so formidable a danger as to drive Mary Tudor to her marriage with Philip of Spain. But the danger became a still greater one on the accession of Elizabeth, whose legitimacy no Catholic acknowledged, and whose religious attitude tended to throw the Catholic party into her rival's hands.

Elizabeth and Scotland

In spite of the peace with France, therefore, Francis and Mary persisted in their pretensions; and a French force which occupied Leith was slowly increased, with the connivance of Mary of Guise. The appearance of this force on the Border was intended to bring about a Catholic rising. But the hostility between France and Spain bound Philip, for the moment, to the support of Elizabeth; and his influence over the Catholics secured quiet for a time. The Queen, too, played with their hopes of a religious reaction by talk of her own conversion, by the re-introduction of the crucifix into her chapel, and by plans for her marriage with an Austrian and Catholic prince. Meanwhile she parried the blow in Scotland itself, where the Reformation had just begun to gain ground, by secretly encouraging the "Lords of the Congregation," as the nobles who headed the Protestant party were styled, to rise against the Regent. Elizabeth's diplomacy gained her a year, and her matchless activity used the year to good purpose. Order was restored throughout England, the Church was reorganized, the debts of the Crown were paid off, the treasury recruited, a navy created, and a force was

ready for action in the north, when the defeat of her Scotch adherents forced her at last to throw aside the mask. As yet she stood almost alone in her self-reliance. Spain, while supporting her, believed her ruin to be certain; France despised her chances; her very Council was in despair. The one minister in whom she really confided was Cecil, the youngest and boldest of her advisers, and even Cecil trembled for her success. But lies and hesitation were no sooner put aside than the Queen's vigour and tenacity came fairly into play. Wynter, the English admiral, appeared suddenly on the Forth, and forced D'Oysel, the French commander, to fall back upon Leith, at the moment when he was on the point of crushing the Lords of the Congregation. France was taken by surprise, and could give little help save by negotiation; but Elizabeth refused to accept any terms save the withdrawal of every Frenchman, and the abandonment of the claim of Mary Stuart upon her crown. On the refusal of these terms, Lord Grey moved over the border with 8000 men to join the Lords of the Congregation in the siege of Leith. The Scots, indeed, gave little aid; and Philip, in his jealousy of Elizabeth's sudden strength, demanded the abandonment of the enterprise; while an assault on the town signally failed. But Elizabeth was immoveable. Famine did its work better than the sword; and in the Treaty of Edinburgh the French bought the liberation of their army by a pledge to abandon the kingdom, and by an admission of the Queen's title to her throne. The government of Scotland was placed in the hands of a council of its lords; and the provision which secured for the Protestants the free exercise of their religion bound to Elizabeth a party which would be of service to her in any danger from the North.

1558 to 1560

1560

Section IV.—England and Mary Stuart, 1560—1572

[*Authorities.*—To those mentioned under the previous section may be added Strype's "Lives of Parker, Grindal, and Whitgift." A vast literature has been formed round the figure of Mary Stuart; see Hume Brown, "History of Scotland," for a sufficient bibliography. For the revolt of the Netherlands, see Motley, "Dutch Republic" and "United Netherlands"; for general foreign history, see Lavisse et Rambaud, "Histoire Générale," and the "Cambridge Modern History."]

Mary Stuart

The issue of the Scotch war revealed suddenly to Europe the vigour of Elizabeth, and the real strength of her throne. She had freed herself from the control of Philip, she had defied France, she had averted the danger from the North by the creation of an English party among the nobles of Scotland. The same use of religious divisions soon gave her a similar check on the hostility of France. The Huguenots, as the French Protestants were called, had become a formidable party under the guidance of the Admiral Coligny; and the defeat of their rising against the family of the Guises, who stood at the head of the French Catholics and were

1560 to 1572 — 1561

supreme at the Court of Francis and Mary, threw them on the support and alliance of Elizabeth. But if the decisive outbreak of the great religious struggle, so long looked for between the Old Faith and the New, gave Elizabeth strength abroad, it weakened her at home. Her Catholic subjects lost all hope of her conversion as they saw the Queen allying herself with the Scotch lords and the French Huguenots; her hopes of a religious compromise in matters of worship were broken by the issue of a Papal brief which forbade attendance at the English service; and Philip of Spain, freed like herself from the fear of France by its religious divisions, no longer held the English Catholics in check. He was preparing, in fact, to take a new political stand as the patron of Catholicism throughout the world; and his troops were directed to support the Guises in the civil war which broke out after the death of Francis the Second, and to attack the heretics wherever they might find them. "Religion," he told Elizabeth, "was being made a cloak for anarchy and revolution." It was at the moment when the last hopes of the English Catholics were dispelled by the Queen's refusal to take part in the Council of Trent, that Mary Stuart, whom the death of her husband had left a stranger in France, landed suddenly at Leith. Girl as she was, and she was only nineteen, she was hardly inferior in intellectual power to Elizabeth herself, while in fire and grace and brilliancy of temper she stood high above her. She brought with her the voluptuous refinement of the French Renascence; she would lounge for days in bed, and rise only at night for dances and music. But her frame was of iron, and incapable of fatigue; she galloped ninety miles after her last defeat without a pause save to change horses. She loved risk and adventure and the ring of arms; as she rode in a foray against Huntley, the grim swordsman beside her heard her wish she was a man, "to know what life it was to lie all night in the field, or to watch on the cawsey with a Glasgow buckler and a broadsword." But in the closet she was as cool and astute a politician as Elizabeth herself; with plans as subtle, but of a far wider and grander range than the Queen's. "Whatever policy is in all the chief and best practised heads of France," wrote an English envoy, "whatever craft, falsehood, and deceit is in all the subtle brains of Scotland, is either fresh in this woman's memory, or she can fetch it out with a wet finger." Her beauty, her exquisite grace of manner, her generosity of temper and warmth of affection, her frankness of speech, her sensibility, her gaiety, her womanly tears, her man-like courage, the play and freedom of her nature, the flashes of poetry that broke from her at every intense moment of her life, flung a spell over friend or foe which has only deepened with the lapse of years. Even to Knollys, the sternest Puritan of his day, she seemed in her captivity to be "a notable woman." "She seemeth to regard no ceremonious honour besides the acknowledgment of her estate royal. She showeth a disposition to speak much, to be bold, to be pleasant, to be very familiar. She showeth

a great desire to be avenged on her enemies. She shows a readiness to expose herself to all perils in hope of victory. She desires much to hear of hardiness and valiancy, commending by name all approved hardy men of her country though they be her enemies, and she concealeth no cowardice even in her friends." As yet men knew nothing of the stern bigotry, the intensity of passion which lay beneath the winning surface of Mary's womanhood. But they at once recognized her political ability. She had seized eagerly on the new strength which was given her by her husband's death. Her cause was no longer hampered, either in Scotland or in England, by a national jealousy of French interference. It was with a resolve to break the league between Elizabeth and the Scotch Protestants, to unite her own realm around her, and thus to give a firm base for her intrigues among the English Catholics, that Mary landed at Leith. The effect of her presence was marvellous. Her personal fascination revived the national loyalty, and swept all Scotland to her feet. Knox, the greatest and sternest of the Calvinistic preachers, alone withstood her spell. The rough Scotch nobles owned that there was in Mary "some enchantment whereby men are bewitched." A promise of religious toleration united her subjects as one man in support of the temperate claim which she advanced to be named Elizabeth's successor in Parliament. But the question of the succession, like the question of her marriage, was with Elizabeth a question of life and death. Her wedding with a Catholic or a Protestant suitor would have been equally the end of her system of balance and national union, a signal for the revolt of the party which she disappointed, and for the triumphant dictation of the party which she satisfied. "If a Catholic prince come here," a Spanish ambassador wrote while pressing an Austrian marriage, "the first mass he attends will be the signal for a revolt." To name a Protestant successor from the House of Suffolk would have driven every Catholic to insurrection. To name Mary was to stir Protestantism to a rising of despair, and to leave Elizabeth at the mercy of every fanatical assassin who wished to clear the way for a Catholic ruler. "I am not so foolish," was the Queen's reply to Mary, "as to hang a winding sheet before my eyes." But the pressure on her was great, and Mary looked to the triumph of Catholicism in France to increase the pressure. It was this which drove Elizabeth to listen to the cry of the Huguenots at the moment when they were yielding to the strength of the Guises. Hate war as she might, the instinct of self-preservation dragged her into the great struggle; and in spite of the menaces of Philip, money and seven thousand men were sent to the aid of the Protestants under Condé. But a fatal overthrow of the Huguenot army at Dreux left the Guises masters of France, and brought the danger to the very doors of England. The hopes of the English Catholics rose higher, and the measures of the Parliament showed its apprehensions of civil war. "There has been enough of words," said the Puritan Sir Francis Knollys; "it were time to draw

1560 to 1572

1562

1560 to 1572 — 1562 1563

sword;" and the sword was drawn in a Test Act, the first in a series of penal statutes which weighed upon the English Catholics for two hundred years, by which the oath of allegiance and abjuration of the temporal authority of the Pope was exacted from all holders of office, lay or spiritual, within the realm, with the exception of peers. At this crisis, however, Elizabeth was able, as usual, to "count much on Fortune." The assassination of the Duke of Guise broke up his party; a policy of moderation and balance prevailed at the French Court; and Catharine of Medicis, who was now supreme, was parted from Mary Stuart by a bitter hate.

The Darnley Marriage

The Queen's good luck was chequered by a merited humiliation. She had sold her aid to the Huguenots in their hour of distress at the price of the surrender of Havre, and Havre was again wrested from her by the reunion of the French parties. But she had secured a year's respite in her anxieties; and Mary was utterly foiled in her plan for bringing the pressure of a united Scotland, backed by France, to bear upon her rival. But the defeat only threw her on a yet more formidable scheme. She was weary of the mask of religious indifference which her policy had forced her to wear with the view of securing the general support of her subjects. She resolved now to appeal to the English Catholics on the ground of Catholicism. Their sympathies had as yet been divided. Next to Mary in the hereditary line of succession stood Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, the son of the Countess of Lennox, the grandson of Margaret Tudor by her second marriage with the Earl of Angus, as Mary was her grandchild by Margaret's first marriage with James the Fourth. The Lennoxes had remained rigid Catholics, and it was upon their succession rather than on that of the Queen of Scots that the hopes of the English Catholics had till now been fixed. It was by a match with Henry Stuart that Mary determined to unite the forces of Catholicism. With wonderful subtlety she succeeded in dispelling Elizabeth's suspicions, while drawing the boy and his mother to her Court; and the threat of war with which the English Queen strove too late to prevent the marriage only succeeded in hastening it. The match was regarded on all sides as a challenge to Protestantism. Philip, who had till now regarded Mary's pretence of toleration and her hopes from France with equal suspicion, was at last warm in commending her cause. "She is the one gate," he owned, "through which Religion can be restored in England. All the rest are closed." The Lords of the Congregation woke with a start from their confidence in the Queen, and her half-brother, Lord James Stuart, better known later on as Earl of Murray, mustered his Protestant confederates. But their revolt was hardly declared when Mary marched on them with pistols in her belt, and drove their leaders helplessly over the Border. Her boldness and energy cowed Elizabeth into the meanest dissimulation, while the announcement of her pregnancy soon gave her a strength which swept aside Philip's counsels of caution and

1565

delay. "With the help of God and of your Holiness," Mary wrote to the Pope, "I will leap over the wall." Rizzio, an Italian who had counselled the marriage, still remained her adviser, and the daring advice he gave fell in with her natural temper. She had resolved in the coming Parliament to restore Catholicism in Scotland. France in a fresh revolution fell again under the Guises, and offered her support. The English Catholics of the North prepared to revolt as soon as she was ready to aid them. No such danger had ever threatened Elizabeth as this, but everything hung on the will of a woman whose passions were even stronger than her will. Mary had staked all on her union with Darnley, and yet only a few months had passed since her wedding day when men saw that she "hated the King." The boy turned out a dissolute, insolent husband; and Mary's scornful refusal of his claim of the "crown matrimonial," a refusal probably inspired by her Italian minister Rizzio, drove his jealousy to madness. At the very moment when the Queen revealed the extent of her schemes by the attainder of Murray and his adherents and by her dismissal of the English ambassador, the young King, followed by his kindred the Douglases, burst into her chamber, dragged Rizzio from her presence, and stabbed him brutally on the stair-head. The darker features of Mary's character were now to develop themselves. Darnley, keen as was her thirst for vengeance on him, was needful as yet to her revenge on his abettors, and to the triumph of her political aims. She masked her hatred beneath a show of affection which severed the wretched boy from his fellow-conspirators; then, flinging herself into Dunbar, she marched in triumph on Edinburgh at the head of eight thousand men, while the Douglases and the Protestant Lords who had shrunk from joining Murray fled to England or their strongholds. Her intrigues with the English Catholics she had never interrupted, and her Court was full of Papists from the northern counties. "Your actions," Elizabeth wrote in a sudden break of fierce candour, "are as full of venom as your words are of honey." The birth of her child, the future James the Sixth of Scotland and First of England, doubled Mary's strength. "Her friends were so increased," an ambassador wrote to her from England, "that many whole shires were ready to rebel, and their captains named by election of the nobility." However exaggerated such news may have been, the anxiety of the Parliament which met at this crisis proved that the danger was felt to be real. The Houses saw but one way of providing against it; and they renewed their appeal for the Queen's marriage, and for a settlement of the succession. As we have seen, both of these measures involved even greater dangers than they averted; but Elizabeth stood alone in her resistance to them. Even Cecil's fears for "the religion" proved greater than his statesmanship; and he pressed for a Protestant successor. But the Queen stood firm. The promise to marry, which she gave after a furious burst of anger, she resolved to evade as she had evaded it before. But the

1560 to 1572

1566

1560 to 1572

quarrel with the Commons which followed on her prohibition of any debate on the succession, a quarrel to which we shall recur at a later time, hit Elizabeth hard. It was "secret foes at home," she told the Commons as their quarrel passed away in a warm reconciliation, who "thought to work me that mischief which never foreign enemies could bring to pass, which is the hatred of my Commons. Do you think that either I am so unmindful of your surety by succession, wherein is all my care, or that I went about to break your liberties? No! it never was my meaning; but to stay you before you fell into the ditch." It was impossible for her however to explain the real reasons for her course, and the dissolution of the Parliament left her face to face with a new national discontent added to the ever-deepening peril from without.

The Darnley Murder

One terrible event suddenly struck light through the gathering clouds. Mary had used Darnley as a tool to effect the ruin of his confederates and to further her policy, but she had never forgiven him. The miserable boy was left to wander in disgrace and neglect from place to place; while Mary's purpose of vengeance was quickened by Darnley's complaints and intrigues, and yet more by her passion for the Earl of Bothwell, the boldest, as he was the most worthless, of the younger nobles. Ominous words dropped from her lips. "Unless she were freed of him some way," she said at last, "she had no pleasure to live." Rumours of an approaching divorce were followed by darker whispers among the lords. The terrible secret of the deed which followed is still wrapt in a cloud of doubt and mystery, which will probably never be wholly dispelled; but taken simply by themselves the facts have a significance which it is impossible to explain away. The Queen's hatred to Darnley passed all at once into demonstrations of the old affection. He had fallen sick with vice and misery, and she visited him on his sick bed, and persuaded him to follow her to Edinburgh. She visited him again in a ruinous and lonely house without the walls, in which he was lodged by her order, kissed him as she bade him farewell, and rode gaily back to a wedding-dance at Holyrood. Two hours after midnight an awful explosion shook the city; and

1567

the burghers rushed out from the gates to find the house of Kirk o' Field destroyed, and Darnley's body dead beside the ruins, though "with no sign of fire on it." The murder was undoubtedly the deed of Bothwell. His servants, it was soon known, had stored the powder beneath the King's bed-chamber; and the Earl had watched without the walls till the deed was done. But, in spite of gathering suspicion, and of the charge of murder made formally against him by Lord Lennox, no serious steps were taken to investigate the crime; and a rumour that Mary purposed to marry the murderer drove her friends to despair. Her agent in England wrote to her that "if she married that man she would lose the favour of God, her own reputation, and the hearts of all England, Ireland, and Scotland." But every stronghold in the kingdom was soon placed in Bothwell's hands, and this step was the prelude

to a trial and acquittal which the overwhelming force of his followers in Edinburgh turned into a bitter mockery. The Earl was married, but a shameless suit for his divorce removed this last obstacle to his ambition; and his seizure of the Queen on her way from Linlithgow was followed by a marriage. They rode to Dunbar. In a month more all was over. The horror at such a marriage with a man fresh from her husband's blood drove the whole nation to revolt. Its nobles, Catholic as well as Protestant, gathered in arms at Stirling; and their entrance into Edinburgh roused the capital into insurrection. Mary and the Earl advanced with a fair force to Seton to encounter the Lords; but their men refused to fight, and Bothwell galloped off into lifelong exile, while the Queen was brought back to Edinburgh in a frenzy of despair, tossing back wild words of defiance to the curses of the crowd. From Edinburgh she was carried a prisoner to the fortress of Lochleven; and her brother, the Earl of Murray, was recalled from France to accept the Regency of the realm. 1560 to 1572

For the moment England was saved, but the ruin of Mary's hopes had not come one instant too soon. The great conflict between the two religions, which had begun in France, was slowly widening into a general struggle over the whole face of Europe. For four years the balanced policy of Catharine of Medicis had wrested a truce from both Catholics and Huguenots, but Condé and the Guises again rose in arms, each side eager to find its profit in the new troubles which now broke out in Flanders. For the long persecution of the Protestants there, and the unscrupulous invasion of the constitutional liberties of the Provinces by Philip of Spain, had at last stirred the Netherlands to revolt; and the insurrection was seized by Philip as a pretext for dealing a blow he had long meditated at the growing heresy of this portion of his dominions. At the moment when Mary entered Lochleven, the Duke of Alva was starting with a veteran army on his march to the Low Countries; and with his easy triumph over their insurgent forces began the terrible series of outrages and massacres which have made his name infamous in history. No event could be more embarrassing to Elizabeth than the arrival of Alva in Flanders. His extirpation of heresy there would prove the prelude for his co-operation with the Guises in the extirpation of heresy in France. Without counting, too, this future danger, the mere triumph of Catholicism, and the presence of a Catholic army, in a country so closely connected with England at once revived the dreams of a Catholic rising against her throne; while the news of Alva's massacres stirred in every one of her Protestant subjects a thirst for revenge which it was hard to hold in check. Yet to strike a blow at Alva was impossible, for Antwerp was the great mart of English trade, and its master had our rising commerce in his power. A final stoppage of the trade with Flanders would have broken half the merchants in London. Every day was deepening the perplexities of Elizabeth, when Mary succeeded in making her Mary in England

1560 to 1572 — 1568

escape from Lochleven. Defeated at Langsyde, where the energy of Murray promptly crushed the rising of the Hamiltons in her support, she abandoned all hope of Scotland; and changing her designs with the rapidity of genius, she pushed in a light boat across the Solway, and was safe before evening fell in the castle of Carlisle. Though her power over her own kingdom was gone, she saw that imprisonment and suffering had done much to wipe away her shame in the hearts of the Catholic party across the English border, kindled as they were to new hopes of triumph by the victories of Alva. But the presence of Alva in Flanders was a far less peril than the presence of Mary in Carlisle. To retain her in England was to furnish a centre for revolt; Mary herself, indeed, threatened that "if they kept her prisoner they should have enough to do with her." Her ostensible demand was for English aid in her restoration to the throne, or for a free passage to France: but compliance with the last request would have given the Guises a terrible weapon against Elizabeth and have ensured a new French intervention in Scotland, while to restore her by arms to the crown she had lost without some public investigation of the dark crimes laid to her charge was impossible. So eager, however, was Elizabeth to get rid of the pressing peril of her presence in England, that Mary's refusal to submit to any trial only drove her to fresh devices for her restoration. She urged upon Murray the suppression of the graver charges and upon Mary the leaving Murray in actual possession of the Royal power as the price of her return. Neither however would listen to terms which sacrificed both to Elizabeth's self-interest; the Regent formally advanced charges of murder and adultery against the Queen, while Mary refused either to answer, or to abdicate in favour of her infant son. The triumph indeed of her bold policy was best advanced, as the Queen of Scots had no doubt foreseen, by simple inaction. Elizabeth "had the wolf by the ears," while the fierce contest which Alva's cruelty roused in the Netherlands was firing the temper of the two great parties in England.

The Catholic Revolt

In the Court, as in the country, the forces of progress and of resistance stood at last in sharp and declared opposition to each other. Cecil, at the head of the Protestants, demanded a general alliance with the Protestant churches throughout Europe, a war in Flanders against Alva, and the unconditional surrender of Mary to her Scotch subjects for the punishment she deserved. The Catholics, on the other hand, backed by the mass of the Conservative party with the Duke of Norfolk at its head, and supported by the wealthier merchants, who dreaded the ruin of the Flemish trade, were as earnest in demanding the dismissal of Cecil and the Protestants from the council board, a steady peace with Spain, and, though less openly, a recognition of Mary's succession. Elizabeth was driven to temporize as before. She refused Cecil's counsels; but she sent money and arms to Condé, and hampered Alva by seizing treasure on its way to him, and by pushing the

quarrel even to a temporary embargo on shipping either side the sea. She refused the counsels of Norfolk; but she would hear nothing of a declaration of war, or give any judgment on the charges against the Scottish Queen, or recognize the accession of James in her stead. The patience of the great Catholic lords, however, was at last exhausted; and the effect of Mary's presence in England was seen in the rising of the houses of Neville and of Percy. The entry of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland into Durham Cathedral proved the signal for revolt. The rising was a purely Catholic rising; the Bible and Prayer-book were torn to pieces, and Mass said once more at the altar of St. Cuthbert, before the Earls pushed on to Doncaster with an army which soon swelled to thousands of men. Their cry was "to reduce all causes of religion to the old custom and usage;" and the Earl of Sussex, her general in the north, wrote frankly to Elizabeth that "there were not ten gentlemen in Yorkshire that did allow [approve] her proceedings in the cause of religion." But he was as loyal as he was frank, and held York stoutly, while the Queen deprived the revolt of its most effective weapon by Mary's hasty removal to a new prison at Coventry. The storm however broke as rapidly as it had gathered. The mass of the Catholics throughout the country made no sign; and the Earls no sooner halted irresolute in presence of this unexpected inaction than their army caught the panic and dispersed. Northumberland and Westmoreland fled, and were followed in their flight by Lord Dacre of Naworth, the greatest noble of the Border; while their miserable adherents paid for their disloyalty in bloodshed and ruin. The ruthless measures of repression which closed this revolt were the first breach in the clemency of Elizabeth's rule, but they were signs of terror which were not lost on her opponents. It was the general inaction of the Catholics which had foiled the hopes of the northern Earls; and Rome now did its best to stir them to activity by issuing a Bull of Excommunication and Deposition against the Queen, which was found nailed in a spirit of ironical defiance on the Bishop of London's door. The Catholics of the north withdrew stubbornly from the Anglican worship; while Mary, who had been foiled in new hopes of her restoration which had opened through the assassination of the Regent Murray by the refusal of the Scotch Lords to accept her, fell back on her old line of intrigue in England itself. From the defeated Catholics she turned to the body of Conservative peers at whose head stood the Duke of Norfolk, a man weak in temper, but important as the representative of the general reluctance to advance further in a purely Protestant direction. His dreams of a marriage with Mary were detected by Cecil, and checked by a short sojourn in the Tower; but his correspondence with the Queen was renewed on his release, and ended in an appeal to Philip for the intervention of a Spanish army. At the head of this appeal stood the name of Mary; while Norfolk's name was followed by those of many lords of "the old

1560 to 1572

1569

1570

1570

1560 to 1572 blood," as the prouder peers styled themselves; and the significance of the request was heightened by gatherings of Catholic refugees at Antwerp round the leaders of the Northern Revolt. Enough of these conspiracies was discovered to rouse a fresh ardour in the menaced Protestants. The Parliament met to pass an act of attainder against the northern Earls, and to declare the introduction of Papal Bulls into the country an act of high treason. The rising indignation against Mary, as "the daughter of Debate, who discord fell doth sow," was shown in a statute, which declared any person who laid claim to the Crown during the Queen's lifetime incapable of ever succeeding to it. The disaffection of the Catholics was met by imposing on all magistrates and public officers the obligation of subscribing to the Articles of Faith, a measure which in fact transferred the administration of justice and public order to their Protestant opponents. Meanwhile Norfolk's treason ripened into an elaborate plot. Philip had promised aid should the revolt actually break out; but the clue to these negotiations had long been in Cecil's hands, and before a single step could be taken towards the practical realization of his
1572 schemes of ambition, they were foiled by Norfolk's arrest. With his death and that of Northumberland, who followed him to the scaffold, the dread of a revolt within the realm, which had so long hung over England, passed quietly away. The failure of the two attempts not only showed the weakness and disunion of the party of discontent and reaction, but it revealed the weakness of all party feeling before the rise of a national temper which was springing naturally out of the peace of Elizabeth's reign, and which a growing sense of danger to the order and prosperity around it was fast turning into a passionate loyalty to the Queen. It was not merely against Cecil's watchfulness or Elizabeth's cunning that Mary and Philip and the Percies dashed themselves in vain; it was against a new England.

The foreign policy of Elizabeth is open to various interpretations; it is impossible to decide with any certainty the true underlying motives of her conduct. For the whole question, see Pollard, "Political History of England, 1547-1603."

Section V.—The England of Elizabeth

[*Authorities*—For the constitutional history of the period, see Hallam, "Constitutional History," and Gneist, "Constitutional History." For commerce and industry, see the collections published by the Hakluyt Society; and Cunningham, "Growth of British Industry and Commerce." For the history of literature, see Jusserand, "Histoire Littéraire du Peuple anglais," and the biographies in the English Men of Letters series.]

Elizabeth and the Poor Laws "I have desired," Elizabeth said proudly to her Parliament, "to have the obedience of my subjects by love, and not by compulsion." It was a love fairly won by justice and good government. Buried as she seemed in foreign negotiations and intrigues, Elizabeth was

above all an English sovereign. She devoted herself ably and energetically to the task of civil administration. She had hardly mounted the throne, indeed, when she faced the problem of social discontent. Time, and the natural development of new branches of industry, were working quietly for the relief of the glutted labour-market; but, as we have seen under the Protectorate, a vast mass of disorder still existed in England, which found a constant ground of resentment in the enclosures and evictions which accompanied the progress of agricultural change. It was on this host of "broken men" that every rebellion could count for support; their mere existence indeed was an encouragement to civil war, while in peace their presence was felt in the insecurity of life and property, in gangs of marauders which held whole counties in terror, and in "sturdy beggars" who stripped travellers on the road. Under Elizabeth, as under her predecessors, the terrible measures of repression, whose uselessness More had in vain pointed out, went pitilessly on: we find the magistrates of Somersetshire capturing a gang of a hundred at a stroke, hanging fifty at once on the gallows, and complaining bitterly to the Council of the necessity for waiting till the Assizes before they could enjoy the spectacle of the fifty others hanging beside them. But the issue of a Royal commission to enquire into the whole matter enabled the Queen (1562) to deal with the difficulty in a wiser and more effectual way. The old powers to enforce labour on the idle, and settlement on the vagrant class, were continued; and a distinction made as in former acts between these and the impotent and destitute persons who had been confounded with them; and each town and parish was held responsible for the relief of its indigent and disabled poor, as it had long been responsible for the employment of able-bodied mendicants. When voluntary contributions proved insufficient for this purpose, the justices in sessions were enabled by statute to assess all persons in town or parish who refused to contribute in proportion to their ability. The principles embodied in these measures, the principle of local responsibility for local distress, and that of a distinction between the pauper and the vagabond, were more clearly defined in two statutes which marked the middle period of Elizabeth's reign. In 1572 houses of correction were ordered to be established for the punishment and amendment of the vagabond class by means of compulsory labour; in 1597, power to levy and assess a general rate in each parish for the relief of the poor was transferred from the justices to its churchwardens. The well-known Act which matured and finally established this system, the 43rd of Elizabeth, remained the base of our system of pauper-administration until a time within the recollection of living men. Whatever flaws a later experience has found in these measures, their wise and humane character formed a striking contrast to the legislation which had degraded our statute-book from the date of the Statute of Labourers; and their efficacy at the time was proved

1601

by the entire cessation of the great social danger against which they were intended to provide.

Progress of the Country

Its cessation however was owing, not merely to law, but to the natural growth of wealth and industry throughout the country. The change in the mode of cultivation, whatever social embarrassment it might bring about, undoubtedly favoured production. Not only was a larger capital brought to bear upon the land, but the mere change in the system brought about a taste for new and better modes of agriculture; the breed of horses and of cattle was improved, and a far greater use made of manure and dressings. One acre under the new system produced, it was said, as much as two under the old. As a more careful and constant cultivation was introduced, a greater number of hands were required on every farm; and much of the surplus labour which had been flung off the land in the commencement of the new system was thus recalled to it. But a far more efficient agency in absorbing the unemployed was found in the development of manufactures. The linen trade was as yet of small value, and that of silk-weaving was only just introduced. But the woollen manufacture had become an important element in the national wealth. England no longer sent her fleeces to be woven in Flanders and to be dyed at Florence. The spinning of yarn, the weaving, fulling, and dyeing of cloth, was spreading rapidly from the towns over the country-side. The worsted trade, of which Norwich was the centre, extended over the whole of the Eastern counties. The farmers' wives began everywhere to spin their wool from their own sheep's backs into a coarse "home-spun." The South and the West still remained the great seats of industry and of wealth, the great homes of mining and manufacturing activity. The iron manufactures were limited to Kent and Sussex, though their prosperity in this quarter was already threatened by the growing scarcity of the wood which fed their furnaces, and by the exhaustion of the forests of the weald. Cornwall was then, as now, the sole exporter of tin; and the exportation of its copper was just beginning. The broadcloths of the West claimed the palm among the woollen stuffs of England. The Cinque Ports held almost a monopoly of the commerce of the Channel. Every little harbour, from the Foreland to the Land's End, sent out its fleet of fishing-boats, manned with the bold seamen who furnished crews for Drake and the Buccaneers. But in the reign of Elizabeth the poverty and inaction to which the North had been doomed since the fall of the Roman rule begins at last to be broken. We see the first signs of the coming revolution which has transferred English manufactures and English wealth to the north of the Mersey and the Humber, in the mention which now meets us of the friezes of Manchester, the coverlets of York, and the dependence of Halifax on its cloth-trade.

English Commerce

The growth, however, of English commerce far outstripped that of its manufactures. We must not judge of it, indeed, by any modern standard; for the whole population of the country can

hardly have exceeded five or six millions, and the burthen of all the vessels engaged in ordinary commerce was estimated at little more than fifty thousand tons. The size of the vessels employed in it would now-a-days seem insignificant; a modern collier brig is probably as large as the biggest merchant vessel which then sailed from the port of London. But it was under Elizabeth that English commerce began the rapid career of development which has made us the carriers of the world. By far the most important branch of it was with Flanders; Antwerp and Bruges were in fact the general marts of the world in the early part of the sixteenth century, and the annual export of English wool and drapery to their markets was estimated at a sum of more than two millions in value. It was with the ruin of Antwerp, at the time of its siege and capture by the Duke of Parma, that the commercial supremacy of our own capital may be said to have been first established. A third of the merchants and manufacturers of the ruined city are said to have found a refuge on the banks of the Thames. The export trade to Flanders died away as London developed into the general mart of Europe, where the gold and sugar of the New World were found side by side with the cotton of India, the silks of the East, and the woollen stuffs of England itself. The foundation of 1566
the Royal Exchange by Sir Thomas Gresham was a mark of the commercial progress of the time. Not only was the old trade of the world transferred in great part to the English Channel, but the sudden burst of national vigour found new outlets for its activity. The Venetian carrying fleet still touched at Southampton; but as far back as the reign of Henry the Seventh a commercial treaty had been concluded with Florence, and the trade with the Mediterranean which had begun under Richard the Third constantly took a wider development. The intercourse between England and the Baltic ports had hitherto been kept up by the Hanseatic merchants; but the extinction of their London depôt, the Steel Yard, at this time, was a sign that this trade too had now passed into English hands. The growth of Boston and Hull marked an increase of commercial intercourse with the North. The prosperity of Bristol, which depended in great measure on the trade with Ireland, was stimulated by the conquest and colonization of that island at the close of the Queen's reign and the beginning of her successor's. The dream of a northern passage to India opened up a trade with a land as yet unknown. Of the three ships which sailed under 1553
Richard Willoughby to realize this dream, two were found afterwards frozen with their crews and their hapless commander on the coast of Lapland; but the third, under Richard Chancellor, made its way safely to the White Sea, and by its discovery of Archangel created the trade with Russia. A more lucrative traffic had already begun with the coast of Guinea, to whose gold dust and ivory the merchants of Southampton owed their wealth; but the guilt of the Slave Trade which sprung out of it rests with John Hawkins, whose arms (a demi-moor, proper, bound with a cord) com- 1562

memorated his priority in the transport of negroes from Africa to the labour-fields of the New World. The fisheries of the Channel and the German Ocean gave occupation to the numerous ports which lined the coast from Yarmouth to Plymouth Haven; Bristol and Chester were rivals in the fisheries of Ulster; and the voyage of Sebastian Cabot from the former port to the mainland of North America had called its vessels to the stormy ocean of the North. From the time of Henry the Eighth the number of English boats engaged on the cod-banks of Newfoundland steadily increased, and at the close of Elizabeth's reign the seamen of Biscay found English rivals in the whale-fishery of the Polar seas.

Wealth and Social Progress

What Elizabeth really contributed to this commercial development was the peace and social order from which it sprang, and the thrift which spared the purses of her subjects by enabling her to content herself with the ordinary resources of the Crown. She lent, too, a ready patronage to the new commerce, she shared in its speculations, she considered its extension and protection as a part of public policy, and she sanctioned the formation of the great Merchant Companies which could then alone secure the trader against wrong or injustice in distant countries. The Merchant-Adventurers of London, a body which had existed long before, and had received a charter of incorporation under Henry the Seventh, furnished a model for the Russian Company, and the Company which absorbed the new commerce to the Indies. But it was not wholly with satisfaction that either Elizabeth or her ministers watched the social change which wealth was producing around them. They feared the increased expenditure and comfort which necessarily followed it, as likely to impoverish the land and to eat out the hardihood of the people. "England spendeth more on wines in one year," complained Cecil, "than it did in ancient times in four years." The disuse of salt-fish and the greater consumption of meat marked the improvement which was taking place among the agricultural classes. Their rough and wattled farmhouses were being superseded by dwellings of brick and stone. Pewter was replacing the wooden trenchers of the earlier yeomanry; there were yeomen who could boast of a fair show of silver plate. It is from this period, indeed, that we can first date the rise of a conception which seems to us now a peculiarly English one, the conception of domestic comfort. The chimney-corner, so closely associated with family life, came into existence with the general introduction of chimneys, a feature rare in ordinary houses at the beginning of this reign. Pillows, which had before been despised by the farmer and the trader as fit only "for women in child-bed," were now in general use. Carpets superseded the filthy flooring of rushes. The lofty houses of the wealthier merchants, their parapeted fronts, their costly wainscoting, the cumbrous but elaborate beds, the carved staircases, the quaintly figured gables, not only broke the mean appearance which had till then characterized English towns, but marked the rise of a new middle and com-

mercial class which was to play its part in later history. A transformation of an even more striking kind proclaimed the extinction of the feudal character of the noblesse. Gloomy walls and serried battlements disappeared from the dwellings of the gentry. The strength of the mediæval fortress gave way to the pomp and grace of the Elizabethan Hall. Knowle, Longleat, Burleigh and Hatfield, Hardwick and Audley End, are familiar instances of the social as well as architectural change which covered England with buildings where the thought of defence was abandoned for that of domestic comfort and refinement. We still gaze with pleasure on their picturesque line of gables, their fretted fronts, their gilded turrets and fanciful vanes, their castellated gateways, the jutting oriels from which the great noble looked down on his new Italian garden, its stately terraces, and broad flights of steps, its vases and fountains, its quaint mazes, its formal walks, its lines of yews cut into grotesque shapes in hopeless rivalry of the cypress avenues of the South. It was the Italian refinement of life which remodelled the interior of such houses, raised the principal apartments to an upper floor—a change to which we owe the grand staircases of the time—surrounded the quiet courts by long "galleries of the presence," crowned the rude hearth with huge chimney-pieces adorned with fauns and cupids, with quaintly interlaced monograms and fantastic arabesques, hung tapestries on the walls, and crowded each chamber with quaintly carved chairs and costly cabinets. The life of the Middle Ages concentrated itself in the vast castle hall, where the baron looked from his upper daïs on the retainers who gathered at his board. But the great households were fast breaking up; and the whole feudal economy disappeared when the lord of the household withdrew with his family into his "parlour" or "withdrawing-room," and left the hall to his dependants. He no longer rode at the head of his servants, but sate apart in the newly-introduced "coach." The prodigal use of glass became a marked feature in the domestic architecture of the time, and one whose influence on the general health of the people can hardly be over-estimated. Long lines of windows stretched over the fronts of the new manor halls. Every merchant's house had its oriel. "You shall have sometimes," Lord Bacon grumbled, "your houses so full of glass, that we cannot tell where to come to be out of the sun or the cold." But the prodigal enjoyment of light and sunshine was a mark of the temper of the age. The lavishness of a new wealth united with a lavishness of life, a love of beauty, of colour, of display, to revolutionize English dress. The Queen's three thousand robes were rivalled in their bravery by the slashed velvets, the ruffs, the jewelled purpoints of the courtiers around her. Men "wore a manor on their backs." The old sober notions of thrift melted before the strange revolutions of fortune wrought by the New World. Gallants gambled away a fortune at a sitting, and sailed off to make a fresh one in the Indies. Visions of galleons loaded to the brim with pearls and

diamonds and ingots of silver, dreams of El Dorados where all was of gold, threw a haze of prodigality and profusion over the imagination of the meanest seaman. The wonders, too, of the New World kindled a burst of extravagant fancy in the Old. The strange medley of past and present which distinguishes its masques and feastings only reflected the medley of men's thoughts. Pedantry, novelty, the allegory of Italy, the chivalry of the Middle Ages, the mythology of Rome, the English bear-fight, pastorals, superstition, farce, all took their turn in the entertainment which Lord Leicester provided for the Queen at Kenilworth. A "wild man" from the Indies chanted her praises, and Echo answered him. Elizabeth turned from the greetings of sibyls and giants to deliver the enchanted lady from her tyrant "Sans Pitie." Shepherdesses welcomed her with carols of the spring, while Ceres and Bacchus poured their corn and grapes at her feet.

The Revival of English Literature

It was to this turmoil of men's minds, this wayward luxuriance and prodigality of fancy, that we owe the revival of English letters under Elizabeth. Here, as elsewhere, the Renascence found vernacular literature all but dead, poetry reduced to the doggrel of Skelton, history to the annals of Fabyan or Hall; and the overpowering influence of the new models, both of thought and style, which it gave to the world in the writers of Greece and Rome, was at first felt only as a fresh check to the dreams of any revival of English poetry or prose. Though England, indeed, shared more than any European country in the political and ecclesiastical results of the New Learning, in mere literary results it stood far behind the rest of Europe—Italy, or Germany, or France. More alone ranks among the great classical scholars of the sixteenth century. Classical learning, indeed, all but perished at the Universities in the storm of the Reformation, nor did it revive there till the close of Elizabeth's reign. Insensibly, however, the influences of the Renascence were fertilizing the intellectual soil of England for the rich harvest that was to come. The growth of the grammar schools was realizing the dream of Sir Thomas More, and bringing the middle-classes, from the squire to the petty tradesman, into contact with the masters of Greece and Rome. The love of travel, which became so remarkable a characteristic of Elizabeth's day, quickened the intelligence of the wealthier nobles. "Home-keeping youths," says Shakspere in words that mark the time, "have ever homely wits," and a tour over the Continent was just becoming part of the education of a gentleman. Fairfax's version of Tasso, Harrington's version of Ariosto, were signs of the influence which the literature of Italy, the land to which travel led most frequently, exerted on English minds. The writers of Greece and Rome began at last to tell upon England when they were popularized by a crowd of translations. Chapman's noble version of Homer stands high above its fellows, but all the greater poets and historians of the classical world were turned into English before the close of the sixteenth century. It is characteristic,

perhaps, of England that historical literature was the first to rise from its long death, though the form in which it rose marked forcibly the difference between the world in which it had perished and that in which it re-appeared. During the Middle Ages the world had been without a past, save the shadowy and unknown past of early Rome; and annalist and chronicler told the story of the years which went before, as a preface to his tale of the present, but without a sense of any difference between them. But the great religious, social, and political change which had passed over England under the New Monarchy had broken the continuity of its life; and the depth of the rift between the two ages is seen by the way in which History passes on its revival under Elizabeth from the mediæval form of pure narrative to its modern form of an investigation and reconstruction of the past. The new interest which attached to the bygone world led to the collection of its annals, their reprinting, and embodiment in an English shape. It was his desire to give the Elizabethan Church a basis in the past, as much as any pure zeal for letters, which induced Archbishop Parker to lead the way in the first of these labours. The collection of historical manuscripts which, following in the track of Leland, he rescued from the wreck of the monastic libraries, created a school of antiquarian imitators, whose research and industry has preserved for us almost every work of permanent historical value which existed before the Dissolution of the Monasteries. To his publication of some of our earlier chronicles we owe the series of similar publications which bear the name of Camden, Twysden, and Gale, and which are now receiving their completion in the works issued by the Master of the Rolls. But as a branch of literature, English History in the new shape which we have noted began in the work of the poet Daniel. The chronicles of Stowe and Speed, who preceded him, are simple records of the past, often copied almost literally from the annals they used, and utterly without style or arrangement; while Daniel, inaccurate and superficial as he is, gave his story a literary form and embodied it in a pure and graceful prose. Two larger works at the close of Elizabeth's reign, the "History of the Turks" by Knolles and Raleigh's vast but unfinished plan of the "History of the World," showed the widening of historic interest beyond the merely national bounds to which it had hitherto been confined.

Italy and English Literature

A far higher development of our literature sprang from the growing influence which Italy, as we have seen, was exerting, partly through travel and partly through its poetry and romances, on the manners and taste of the time. Men made more account of a story of Boccaccio's, it was said, than a story from the Bible. The dress, the speech, the manners of Italy became objects of almost passionate imitation, and of an imitation not always of the wisest or noblest kind. To Ascham it seemed like "the enchantment of Circe brought out of Italy to mar men's manners in England." "An Italianate Englishman," ran the harder proverb

of Italy itself, "is an incarnate devil." The literary form which this imitation took seemed at any rate absolutely absurd. John
1579 Lyly, distinguished both as a dramatist and a poet, laid aside the very tradition of English style for a style modelled on the decadence of Italian prose. Euphuism, as the new fashion has been styled from the prose romance of Euphues in which Lyly originated it, is best known to modern readers by the pitiless caricature with which Shakspere quizzed its pedantry, its affectation, the meaningless monotony of its far-fetched phrases, the absurdity of its extravagant conceits. Its representative, Armado in "Love's Labour's Lost," is "a man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight," "that hath a mint of phrases in his brain; one whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony." But its very extravagance sprang from the general burst of delight in the new resources of thought and language which literature felt to be at its disposal; and the new sense of literary beauty which its affectation, its love of a "mint of phrases" and the "music of its ever vain tongue" discloses, the new sense of pleasure in delicacy or grandeur of phrase, in the structure and arrangement of sentences, in what has been termed the atmosphere of words, was a sense out of which style was itself to spring. For a time, Euphuism had it all its own way. Elizabeth was the most affected and detestable of Euphuists; and "that beauty in Court which could not parley Euphuism," a courtier of Charles the First's time tells us, "was as little regarded as she that now there speaks not French." The fashion, however, passed away, but the "Arcadia" of Sir Philip Sidney shows the wonderful advance which prose had made. Sidney, the nephew of Lord Leicester, was the idol of his time, and perhaps no figure reflects the age more fully and more beautifully. Fair as he was brave, quick of wit as of affection, noble and generous in temper, dear to Elizabeth as to Spenser, the darling of the Court and of the camp, his learning and his genius made him the centre of the literary world which was springing into birth on English soil. He had travelled in France and Italy, he was master alike of the older learning and of the new discoveries of astronomy. Bruno dedicated to him as to a friend his metaphysical speculations; he was familiar with the drama of Spain, the poems of Ronsard, the sonnets of Italy. He combined the wisdom of a grave councillor with the romantic chivalry of a knight-errant. "I never heard the old story of Percy and Douglas," he says, "that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet." He flung away his life to save the English army in Flanders, and as he lay dying they brought a cup of water to his fevered lips. Sidney bade them give it to a soldier who was stretched on the ground beside him. "Thy necessity," he said, "is greater than mine." The whole of Sidney's nature, his chivalry and his learning, his thirst for adventures, his tendency to extravagance, his freshness of tone, his tenderness and childlike simplicity of heart, his affectation and false sentiment, his keen sense of

pleasure and delight, pours itself out in the pastoral medley, forced, tedious, and yet strangely beautiful, of his "Arcadia." In his "Defence of Poetry" the youthful exuberance of the romancer has passed into the earnest vigour and grandiose stateliness of the rhetorician. But whether in the one work or the other, the flexibility, the music, the luminous clearness of Sidney's style remains the same. But the quickness and vivacity of English prose was first developed in the school of Italian imitators who appeared in Elizabeth's later years. The origin of English fiction is to be found in the tales and romances with which Greene and Nash crowded the market, models for which they found in the Italian novels. The brief form of these novelettes soon led to the appearance of the "pamphlet;" and a new world of readers was seen in the rapidity with which the stories or scurrilous libels which passed under this name were issued, and the greediness with which they were devoured. It was the boast of Greene that in the eight years before his death he had produced forty pamphlets. "In a night or a day would he have yarked up a pamphlet, as well as in seven years, and glad was that printer that might be blest to pay him dear for the very dregs of his wit." Modern eyes see less of the wit than of the dregs in the works of Greene and his compeers; but the attacks which Nash directed against the Puritans and his rivals were the first English works which shook utterly off the pedantry and extravagance of Euphuism. In his lightness, his facility, his vivacity, his directness of speech, we have the beginning of popular literature. It had descended from the closet to the street, and the very change implied that the street was ready to receive it. The abundance, indeed, of printers and of printed books at the close of the Queen's reign, shows that the world of readers and writers had widened far beyond the small circle of scholars and courtiers with which it began. 1590

Elizabethan England and the Crown

We shall have to review at a later time the great poetic burst for which this intellectual advance was paving the way, and the moral and religious change which was passing over the country through the progress of Puritanism. But both the intellectual and the religious impulse of the age united with the influence of its growing wealth to revive a spirit of independence in the nation at large, a spirit which it was impossible for Elizabeth to understand, but the strength of which her wonderful tact enabled her to feel. Long before any open conflict arose between the people and the Crown, we see her instinctive perception of the change around her in the modifications, conscious or unconscious, which she introduced into the system of the New Monarchy. Of its usurpations on English liberty she abandoned none, but she curtailed and softened down almost all. She tampered, as her predecessors had tampered, with personal freedom; there was the same straining of statutes and coercion of juries in political trials as before, and an arbitrary power of imprisonment was still exercised by the Council. The duties she imposed on cloth and sweet wines were an assertion of

her right of arbitrary taxation. Royal proclamations constantly assumed the force of law. In one part of her policy indeed Elizabeth seemed to fall resolutely back from the constitutional attitude assumed by the Tudor sovereigns. Ever since Cromwell's time the Parliament had been convened almost year by year as a great engine of justice and legislation, but Elizabeth recurred to the older jealousy of the two Houses which had been entertained by Edward the Fourth, Henry the Seventh, and Wolsey. Her Parliaments were summoned at intervals of never less than three, and sometimes of five years, and never save on urgent necessity. Practically however the Royal power was wielded with a caution and moderation that showed the sense of a gathering difficulty in the full exercise of it. The ordinary course of justice was left undisturbed. The jurisdiction of the Council was asserted almost exclusively over the Catholics; and defended, in their case, as a precaution against pressing dangers. The proclamations issued were temporary in character and of small importance. The two duties imposed were so slight as to pass almost unnoticed in the general satisfaction at Elizabeth's abstinence from internal taxation. The benevolences and forced loans which brought home the sense of tyranny to the subjects of her predecessors were absolutely abandoned. She treated the Privy Seals, which on emergencies she issued for advances to her Exchequer, simply as anticipations of her revenue (like our own Exchequer Bills), and punctually repaid them. The monopolies with which she fettered trade proved a more serious grievance; but during her earlier reign they were looked on as a part of the system of Merchant Associations, which were at that time regarded as necessary for the regulation and protection of the growing commerce. Her thrift enabled her to defray the current expenses of the Crown from its ordinary revenues. But the thrift was dictated, not so much by economy, as by the desire to avoid any summoning of Parliament. The Queen saw that the "management" of the two Houses, so easy to Cromwell, was becoming more difficult every day. The rise of a new nobility, enriched by the spoils of the Church and trained to political life among the perils of the religious changes, had given a fresh vigour to the Lords. A curious proof of the increased wealth of the country gentry, as well as of their increased desire to obtain a seat in the Commons, was shown by the cessation at this time of the old practice of payment of members by their constituencies. A change too in the borough representation, which had long been in progress, but was now for the first time legally recognized, tended greatly to increase the vigour and independence of the Lower House. The members for boroughs had been required by the terms of the older writs to be chosen among their burgesses; and an Act of Henry the Fifth gave this custom the force of law. But the passing of the Act shows that it was already widely infringed; and by the time of Elizabeth most borough seats were filled by strangers, often nominees of the great landowners round,

but for the most part men of wealth and blood, whose aim in entering Parliament was a purely political one. So changed, indeed, was the tone of the Commons, even as early as the close of Henry's reign, that Edward and Mary both fell back on the prerogative of the Crown to create boroughs, and summoned members from fresh constituencies, which were often mere villages, and wholly in the hands of the Crown. But this "packing of the House" had still to be continued by their successor. The large number of such members whom Elizabeth called into the Commons, sixty-two in all, was a proof of the increasing difficulty which was now experienced by the Government in securing a working majority.

Elizabeth and the Parliament

Had Elizabeth lived in quiet times her thrift would have saved her from the need of summoning Parliament at all. But the perils of her reign drove her at rare intervals to the demand of a subsidy, and each demand of a subsidy forced her to assemble the Houses. Constitutionally the policy of Cromwell had had this special advantage, that at the very crisis of our liberties it had acknowledged and confirmed by repeated instances, for its own purposes of arbitrary rule, the traditional right of Parliament to grant subsidies, to enact laws, and to consider and petition for the redress of grievances. These rights remained, while the power which had turned them into a mere engine of despotism was growing weaker year by year. Not only did the Parliament of Elizabeth put its powers in force as fully as the Parliament of Cromwell, but the historical tendency which we have noticed, the tendency of the age to fall back on former times for precedents, soon led to a reclaiming of privileges which had died away under the New Monarchy. During the reign of Elizabeth the House of Commons gradually succeeded in protecting its members from all arrest during its sessions, save by permission of the House itself, and won the rights of punishing and expelling members for crimes committed within the House, and of determining all matters relating to their election. The more important claim of freedom of speech brought on a series of petty conflicts which showed Elizabeth's instincts of despotism, as well as her sense of the new power which despotism had to face. In the great crisis of the Darnley marriage Mr. Dutton 1566
defied a Royal prohibition to mention the subject of the succession by a hot denunciation of the Scottish claim. Elizabeth at once ordered him into arrest, but the Commons prayed for leave "to confer upon their liberties," and the Queen ordered his release. In the same spirit she commanded Mr. Strickland, the mover of a bill 1571
for the reform of the Common Prayer, to appear no more in Parliament; but as soon as she perceived that the temper of the Commons was bent upon his restoration the command was withdrawn. On the other hand, the Commons still shrank from any violent defiance of Elizabeth's assumption of control over freedom of speech. The bold protest of a Puritan member, Peter Wentworth, against it 1576
was met by the House itself with a committal to the Tower: and the yet bolder questions which he addressed to a later Parliament,

"whether this Council is not a place for every member of the same freely and without control, by bill or speech, to utter any of the griefs of the Commonwealth?" brought on him a fresh imprisonment at the hands of the Council, which lasted till the dissolution of the Parliament, and with which the Commons declined to interfere. But while vacillating in its assertion of the rights of individual speakers, the House steadily claimed for itself the right to consider three cardinal subjects, the treatment of which had been regarded by every Tudor sovereign as lying exclusively within the competence of the Crown. "Matters of State," as the higher political questions of the time were called, were jealously reserved for the Royal cognizance alone; but the question of the Succession became too vital to English freedom and English religion to remain confined within Elizabeth's council chamber. At the opening of her reign the Commons humbly petitioned for the declaration of a successor and for the Queen's marriage; and in spite of her rebuke and evasive answers, both Houses on their meeting four years after joined in the same demand. Her consciousness of the real dangers of such a request united with her arbitrary temper to move Elizabeth to a burst of passionate anger. The marriage indeed she promised, but she peremptorily forbade the subject of the succession to be approached. Wentworth at once rose in the Commons to know whether such a prohibition was not "against the liberties of Parliament?" and the question was followed by a hot debate. A fresh message from the Queen commanded "that there should be no further argument," but the message was met by a request for freedom of deliberation. Elizabeth's prudence taught her that retreat was necessary; she protested that "she did not mean to prejudice any part of the liberties heretofore granted to them;" she softened the order of silence into a request; and the Commons, won by the graceful concession to a loyal assent, received her message "most joyfully and with most hearty prayers and thanks for the same." But the victory was none the less a real one. No such struggle had taken place between the Commons and the Crown since the beginning of the New Monarchy, and the struggle had ended in the virtual defeat of the Crown. It was the prelude to a claim yet more galling to Elizabeth. Like the rest of the Tudor sovereigns, she held her ecclesiastical supremacy to be a purely personal power, with her administration of which neither Parliament nor even her Council had any right to interfere. But the exclusion of the Catholic gentry through the Test Acts, and the growth of Puritanism among the landowners as a class, gave more and more a Protestant tone to the Commons; and it was easy to remember that the Supremacy which was thus jealously guarded from Parliamentary interference had been conferred on the Crown by a Parliamentary statute. Here, however, the Queen, as the religious representative of the two parties who made up her subjects, stood on firmer ground than the Commons, who represented but one of them. And she used her advantage boldly. The

1688

bills proposed by the Puritans for the reform of the Common Prayer were at her command delivered up into her hands and suppressed. Wentworth, the most outspoken of his party, was, as we have seen, imprisoned in the Tower: and in a later Parliament the Speaker was expressly forbidden to receive bills "for reforming the Church, and transforming the Commonwealth." In spite of these obstacles, however, the effort for reform continued, and though crushed by the Crown or set aside by the Lords, ecclesiastical bills were presented in every Parliament. A better fortune awaited the Commons in their attack on the Royal prerogative in matters of trade. Complaints made of the licenses and monopolies, by which internal and external commerce were fettered, were at first repressed by a Royal reprimand as matters neither pertaining to the Commons nor within the compass of their understanding. When the subject was again stirred, nearly twenty years afterwards, Sir Edward Hoby was sharply rebuked by "a great personage" for his complaint of the illegal exactions made by the Exchequer. But the bill which he promoted was sent up to the Lords in spite of this, and at the close of Elizabeth's reign the storm of popular indignation which had been roused by the growing grievance nerved the Commons to a decisive struggle. It was in vain that the ministers opposed the bill for the Abolition of Monopolies, and after four days of vehement debate the tact of Elizabeth taught her to give way. She acted with her usual ability, declared her previous ignorance of the existence of the evil, thanked the House for its interference, and quashed at a single blow every monopoly that she had granted.

1572

1593

1601

The "packing" of the House of Commons under the Tudors has been rather exaggerated, and it has been contended that the creation of alleged "rotten" boroughs, especially in the west of England, was really designed to give more adequate representation to the new trading interests. Compare Porritt, "Unreformed House of Commons."

Section VI.—The Armada, 1572—1588

[*Authorities.*—In addition to the authorities already mentioned, see Lingard, "History of England," for the position of the Catholics. For the Armada, see Monson's "Naval Tracts" (edited Oppenheim); Oppenheim, "Administration of the Royal Navy"; and Corbett, "Drake and the Tudor Navy" and the "Successors of Drake." Froude, "Spanish Story of the Armada," gives some of the Spanish sources for the history of the Armada.]

The New Protestantism

The wonderful growth in wealth and social energy which we have described was accompanied by a remarkable change in the religious temper of the nation. It was in the years which we are traversing that England became firmly Protestant. The quiet decay of the traditionary Catholicism which formed the religion of three-fourths of the people at Elizabeth's accession is shown by the steady diminution in the number of recusants throughout

1572 to 1588 her reign; and at its close the only parts of England where the old faith retained anything of its former vigour were the north and the extreme west, at that time the poorest and least populated parts of the kingdom. The main cause of the change lay undoubtedly in the gradual dying out of the Catholic priesthood, and the growth of a new Protestant clergy who supplied their place. The older parish priests, though they had almost to a man acquiesced in the changes of ritual and doctrine which the various phases of the Reformation imposed upon them, remained in heart utterly hostile to its spirit. As Mary had undone the changes of Edward, they hoped for a Catholic successor to undo the changes of Elizabeth; and in the meantime they were content to wear the surplice instead of the chasuble, and to use the Communion office instead of the Mass-book. But if they were forced to read the Homilies from the pulpit, the spirit of their teaching remained unchanged; and it was easy for them to cast contempt on the new services, till they seemed to old-fashioned worshippers a mere "Christmas game." But the lapse of twenty years did its work in emptying parsonage after parsonage, and the jealous supervision of Parker and the bishops ensured an inner as well as an outer conformity to the established faith in the clergy who took the place of the dying priesthood. The new parsons were for the most part not merely Protestant in belief and teaching, but ultra-Protestant. The old restrictions on the use of the pulpit were silently removed as the need for them past away, and the zeal of the young ministers showed itself in an assiduous preaching which moulded in their own fashion the religious ideas of the new generation. But their character had even a greater influence than their preaching. Under Henry the priests had for the most part been ignorant and sensual men; and the character of the clergy appointed by the greedy Protestants of Edward's reign was even worse than that of their Popish rivals. But the energy of the Primate, seconded as it was by the general increase of zeal and morality at the time, did its work; and by the close of Elizabeth's reign the moral temper as well as the social character of the clergy had wholly changed. Scholars like Hooker, gentlemen like George Herbert, could now be found in the ranks of the priesthood, and the grosser scandals which had disgraced the clergy as a body for the most part disappeared. It was impossible for a Puritan libeller to bring against the ministers of Elizabeth's reign the charges of drunkenness and immorality which Protestant libellers had been able to bring against the priesthood of Henry's. But the influence of the new clergy was backed by a general revolution in English thought. We have already watched the first upgrowth of the new literature which was to find its highest types in Shakspere and Bacon. The grammar schools were diffusing a new knowledge and mental energy through the middle classes and among the country gentry. The tone of the Universities, no unfair test of the tone of the nation at large, changed wholly as the Queen's reign went on. At its

opening Oxford was a nest of Papists, and sent its best scholars to feed the Catholic seminaries. At its close the University was a hot-bed of Puritanism, where the fiercest tenets of Calvin reigned supreme. The movement was no doubt hastened by the political circumstances of the time. Under the rule of Elizabeth loyalty became more and more a passion among Englishmen; and the Bull of Deposition placed Rome in the forefront of Elizabeth's foes. The conspiracies which festered around Mary were laid to the Pope's charge; he was known to be pressing on France and on Spain the invasion and conquest of the heretic kingdom; he was soon to bless the Armada. Every day made it harder for a Catholic to reconcile Catholicism with loyalty to his Queen or devotion to his country; and the mass of men, who are moved by sentiment rather than by reason, swung slowly round to the side which, whatever its religious significance might be, was the side of patriotism, of liberty against tyranny, of England against Spain. Whatever fire and energy was wanting to the new movement, was given at last by the atrocities which marked the Catholic triumph on the other side of the Channel. The horror of Alva's butcheries, or of the Massacre on St. Bartholomew's day, revived the memories of the bloodshed under Mary. The tale of Protestant sufferings was told with a wonderful pathos and picturesqueness by John Foxe, an exile during the persecution; and his "Book of Martyrs," which had been set up by Royal order in the churches for public reading, passed from the churches to the shelves of every English household. The trading classes of the towns had been the first to embrace the doctrines of the Reformation, but their Protestantism became a passion as the refugees of the Continent brought to shop and market their tale of outrage and blood. Thousands of Flemish exiles found a refuge in the Cinque Ports, a third of the Antwerp merchants were seen pacing the new London Exchange, and a Church of French Huguenots found a home which it still retains in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral. 1572 to 1588

In her ecclesiastical policy Elizabeth trusted mainly to time; and time, as we have seen, justified her trust. Her system of compromise both in faith and worship, of quietly replacing the old priesthood as it died out by Protestant ministers, of wearying recusants into at least outer conformity with the state-religion and attendance on the state-services by fines—a policy aided, no doubt, by the moral influences we have described—was gradually bringing England round to a new religious front. But the decay of Catholicism appealed strongly to the new spirit of Catholic zeal which, in its despair of aid from Catholic princes, was now girding itself for its own bitter struggle with heresy. Dr. Allen, a scholar who had been driven from Oxford by the test prescribed in the Act of Uniformity, had foreseen the results of the dying out of the Marian priests, and had set up a seminary at Douay to supply their place. The new college, liberally supported by the Catholic peers and supplied with pupils by a stream of refugees from The Seminary Priests

1572 to 1588 — 1577

Oxford, soon landed its "seminary priests" on English shores; and few as they were at first, their presence was at once felt in the check which it gave to the gradual reconciliation of the Catholic gentry to the English Church. No check could have been more galling to Elizabeth, and her resentment was quickened by the sense of a fresh danger. She had accepted from the first the issue of the Bull of Deposition as a declaration of war on the part of Rome, and she viewed the Douay priests simply as political emissaries of the Papacy. The comparative security of the Catholics from active persecution during the early part of her reign had arisen, as we have seen, partly from the sympathy and connivance of the gentry who acted as justices of the peace, but still more from her own religious indifference. But the Test Act placed the magistracy in Protestant hands; and as Elizabeth passed from indifference to suspicion, and from suspicion to terror, she no longer chose to restrain the bigotry around her. In quitting Eaton Hall, which she had visited in one of her pilgrimages, the Queen gave its master, young Rookwood, thanks for his entertainment and her hand to kiss. "But my Lord Chamberlain nobly and gravely understanding that Rookwood was excommunicate" for non-attendance at church, "called him before him, demanded of him how he durst presume to attempt her royal presence, he unfit to accompany any Christian person, forthwith said that he was fitter for a pair of stocks, commanded him out of Court, and yet to attend the Council's pleasure." The Council's pleasure was seen in his committal to the town prison at Norwich, while "seven more gentlemen of worship" were fortunate enough to escape with a simple sentence of arrest at their own homes. The Queen's terror became, in fact, a panic in the nation at large. The few priests who landed from Douay were multiplied into an army of Papal emissaries, despatched to sow treason and revolt throughout the land. The Parliament, which had now through the working of the Test Act become a wholly Protestant body, save for the presence of a few Catholics among the peers, was summoned to meet the new danger, and declared the landing of the priests and the harbouring of them to be treason. The Act proved no idle menace; and the execution of Cuthbert Mayne, a young priest who was arrested in Cornwall, gave a terrible indication of the character of the struggle upon which Elizabeth was about to enter. She shrank, indeed, from the charge of religious persecution; she boasted of her abstinence from any interference with men's consciences; and Cecil, in his official defence of her policy, while declaring freedom of worship to be incompatible with religious order, boldly asserted the right of every English subject to perfect freedom of religious opinion. To modern eyes there is something even more revolting than open persecution in the policy which branded every Catholic priest as a traitor, and all Catholic worship as disloyalty; but the first step towards toleration was won when the Queen rested her system of repression on purely political

grounds. Elizabeth was a persecutor, but she was the first English ruler who felt the charge of religious persecution to be a stigma on her rule; the first who distinctly disclaimed religious differences as a ground for putting men to death. It is fair, too, to acknowledge that there was a real political danger in the new missionaries. The efforts of the seminary priests were succeeded by those of a body whose existence was a standing threat to every Protestant throne. A large number of the Oxford refugees at Douay joined the order of the Jesuits, whose members were already famous for their blind devotion to the will and judgments of Rome; and the two ablest and most eloquent of these exiles, Campian, once a fellow of St. John's, and Parsons, once a fellow of Balliol, were selected as the heads of a Jesuit mission in England. For the moment their success was amazing. The eagerness shown to hear Campian was so great, that in spite of the denunciations of the Government, he was able to preach with hardly a show of concealment to a vast audience in Smithfield. From London the missionaries wandered in the disguise of captains or serving-men, or sometimes in the cassock of the English clergy, through many of the counties; and wherever they went the zeal of the Catholic gentry revived. The list of nobles reconciled to the old faith by the wandering apostles was headed by the name of Lord Oxford, Burghley's own son-in-law, and the proudest among English peers. The success of the Jesuits in undoing Elizabeth's work of compromise was shown in a more public way by the unanimity with which the Catholics withdrew from attendance at the national worship. As in the case of the seminary priests, however, the panic of the Protestants and of the Parliament far outran the greatness of the danger. The little group of missionaries was magnified by popular fancy into a host of disguised Jesuits; and the imaginary invasion was met by statutes which prohibited the saying of Mass even in private houses, increased the fine on recusants to twenty pounds a month, and enacted that "all persons pretending to any power of absolving subjects from their allegiance, or practising to withdraw them to the Romish religion, with all persons after the present session willingly so absolved or reconciled to the See of Rome, shall be guilty of High Treason." The way in which the vast powers conferred on the Crown by this statute were used by Elizabeth was not only characteristic in itself, but important as at once defining the policy to which, in theory at least, her successors adhered for more than a hundred years. No layman was brought to the bar or to the block under its provisions. The oppression of the Catholic gentry was limited to an exaction, more or less rigorous at different times, of the fines for recusancy or non-attendance at public worship. The work of bloodshed was reserved wholly for priests, and under Elizabeth this work was done with a ruthless energy which for the moment crushed the Catholic reaction. The Jesuits were tracked by Walsingham's spies, dragged from their hiding-places, and sent in batches to the Tower. So hot

1572 to 1583

1580

1581

1572 to 1588

was the pursuit that Parsons was forced to fly across the Channel; while Campian was brought a prisoner through the streets of London, amidst the howling of the mob, and placed at the bar on the charge of treason. "Our religion only is our crime," was a plea which galled his judges; but the political danger of the Jesuit preaching was disclosed in his evasion of any direct reply, when questioned as to his belief in the validity of the excommunication and deposition of the Queen by the Papal See. The death of Campian was the prelude to a steady, pitiless effort at the extermination of his class. If we adopt the Catholic estimate of the time, the twenty years which followed saw the execution of two hundred priests, while a yet greater number perished in the filthy and fever-stricken gaols into which they were plunged. The work of reconciliation to Rome was arrested by this ruthless energy; but, on the other hand, the work which the priests had effected could not be undone. The system of quiet compulsion and conciliation to which Elizabeth had trusted for the religious reunion of her subjects was foiled; and the English Catholics, fined, imprisoned at every crisis of national danger, and deprived of their teachers by the prison and the gibbet, were severed more hopelessly than ever from the national Church.

Eliza-eth and Philip

But the effect of this bloodshed on the world without was far more violent, and productive of wider and greater results. The torture and death of the Jesuit martyrs sent a thrill of horror through the whole Catholic Church, and roused at last into action the sluggish hostility of Spain. Spain was at this moment the mightiest of European powers. The discoveries of Columbus had given it the New World of the west; the conquests of Cortez and Pizarro poured into its treasury the plunder of Mexico and Peru; its galleons brought the rich produce of the Indies, their gold, their jewels, their ingots of silver, to the harbour of Cadiz. To the New World its King added the fairest and wealthiest portions of the Old; he was master of Naples and Milan—the richest and the most fertile districts of Italy, of the busy provinces of the Low Countries, of Flanders—the great manufacturing district of the time, and of Antwerp, which had become the central mart for the commerce of the world. His native kingdom, poor as it was, supplied him with the steadiest and the most daring soldiers that the world had seen since the fall of the Roman Empire. The renown of the Spanish infantry had been growing from the day when it flung off the onset of the French chivalry on the field of Ravenna; and the Spanish generals stood without rivals in their military skill, as they stood without rivals in their ruthless cruelty. The whole, too, of this enormous power was massed in the hands of a single man. Served as he was by able statesmen and subtle diplomatists, Philip of Spain was his own sole minister; labouring day after day, like a clerk, through the long years of his reign, amidst the papers which crowded his closet; but resolute to let nothing pass without his supervision, and to suffer nothing to be

done save by his express command. It was his boast that everywhere in the vast compass of his dominions he was "an absolute King." It was to realize this idea of absolutism that he crushed the liberties of Arragon, as his father had crushed the liberties of Castile, and sent Alva to tread under foot the constitutional freedom of the Low Countries. His bigotry went hand in hand with his thirst for power. Italy and Spain lay hushed beneath the terror of the Inquisition, while Flanders was being purged of heresy by the stake and the sword. The shadow of this gigantic power fell like a deadly blight over Europe. The new Protestantism, like the new spirit of political liberty, saw its real foe in Philip. It was Spain, rather than the Guises, against which Coligni and the Huguenots struggled in vain; it was Spain with which William of Orange was wrestling for religious and civil freedom; it was Spain which was soon to plunge Germany into the chaos of the Thirty Years' War, and to which the Catholic world had for twenty years been looking, and looking in vain, for a victory over heresy in England. Vast, in fact, as Philip's resources were, they were drained by the yet vaster schemes of ambition into which his religion and his greed of power, as well as the wide distribution of his dominions, perpetually drew him. To coerce the weaker States of Italy, to preserve a commanding influence in Germany, to support Catholicism in France, to crush heresy in Flanders, to despatch one Armada against the Turk and another against Elizabeth, were aims mighty enough to exhaust even the power of the Spanish Monarchy. But it was rather on the character of Philip than on the exhaustion of his treasury that Elizabeth counted for success in the struggle which had so long been going on between them. The King's temper was slow, cautious even to timidity, losing itself continually in delays, in hesitations, in anticipating remote perils, in waiting for distant chances; and on the slowness and hesitation of his temper his rival had been playing ever since she mounted the throne. The diplomatic contest between the two was like the fight which England was soon to see between the ponderous Spanish galleon and the light pinnace of the buccaneers. The agility, the sudden changes of Elizabeth, her lies, her mystifications, though they failed to deceive Philip, puzzled and impeded his mind. But amidst all this cloud of intrigue the Queen's course had in reality been simple. In her earlier days France rivalled Spain in its greatness, and Elizabeth simply played the two rivals off against one another. She hindered France from giving effective aid to Mary Stuart by threats of an alliance with Spain; while she induced Philip to wink at her heresy, and to discourage the risings of the English Catholics, by playing on his dread of her alliance with France. But the tide of religious passion which had so long been held in check broke at last over its banks, and the political face of Europe was instantly changed. The Low Countries, driven to despair by the greed and persecution of Alva, rose in a revolt which after strange alternations of fortune gave to Europe the

1572 to 1588

1572

1572 to 1588

Republic of the United Provinces. The opening which their rising afforded to the ambition of France was at once seized by Coligni and the French Protestants, and used as a political engine to break the power which the Queen-mother Catharine of Medicis exercised over Charles the Ninth. Charles was on the point of surrendering himself to ambition and the Huguenots, when his mother in revenge, or with the blind instinct of self-preservation, flung aside her old policy of balancing the two parties against one another. She threw herself on the side of the Guises, and ensured their triumph by lending herself to their massacre of the Protestants on St. Bartholomew's day. But though the long gathering clouds of religious hatred had broken, Elizabeth trusted to her dexterity to keep out of the storm. If France, torn with civil strife, had ceased to be a balance to Spain, she found a new balance in Flanders. Whatever enthusiasm the heroic struggle of the Prince of Orange excited among her subjects, it failed to move Elizabeth even for an instant from the path of cold self-interest. To her the revolt of the Netherlands was simply "a bridle of Spain, which kept war out of our own gate." At the darkest moment of the contest, when even William of Orange dreamed of abandoning all, and seeking in far-off seas a new home for liberty, the Queen bent her energies to prevent him from finding succour in France. That the Provinces could in the end withstand Philip, neither she nor any English statesmen believed. They held that the struggle must close either in utter subjection of the Netherlands, or in their selling themselves for aid to France; and the accession of power which either result must give to one of her two Catholic foes the Queen was eager to avert. Her plan for averting it was by forcing the Provinces to accept the terms offered by Spain—a restoration, that is, of their constitutional privileges, accompanied by their submission to the Church. Peace on such a footing would not only restore English commerce, which suffered from the war; it would leave Flanders still formidable as a weapon against Philip. The freedom of the Provinces would be saved—and the religious question involved in a fresh submission to the yoke of Catholicism was one which Elizabeth was incapable of appreciating. To her the steady refusal of William the Silent to sacrifice his faith was as unintelligible as the steady bigotry of Philip in demanding such a sacrifice. It was of more immediate consequence that Philip's anxiety to avoid provoking an intervention on the part of England, which would destroy all hope of his success in Flanders, left her tranquil at home. Mary Stuart saw her hope of foreign aid disappear, at a time when the death of Norfolk and Northumberland removed the dread of civil war. At no moment had the Queen felt so secure against a blow from Philip as when Philip at last was forced to deliver his blow.

The Sea-dogs

The control of events was, in fact, passing from the hands of statesmen and diplomatists; and the long period of suspense which their policy had won was ending in the clash of national and

political passions. The rising fanaticism of the Catholic world, driven to frenzy by the martyrdom of the English Jesuits, broke down the caution and hesitation of Philip; while England set aside the balanced neutrality of Elizabeth, and pushed boldly forward to a contest which it felt to be inevitable. The public opinion, to which the Queen was so sensitive, took every day a bolder and more decided tone. When one of the last of her matrimonial intrigues threatened England with a Catholic sovereign in the Duke of Alençon, a younger son of the hated Catherine of Medicis, the popular indignation rose suddenly into a cry against "a Popish King" which the Queen dared not defy. Her cold indifference to the heroic struggle in Flanders was more than compensated by the enthusiasm it excited among the nation at large. The earlier Flemish refugees found a refuge in the Cinque Ports. The exiled merchants of Antwerp were welcomed by the merchants of London. While Elizabeth dribbled out her secret aid to the Prince of Orange, the London traders sent him half-a-million from their own purses, a sum equal to a year's revenue of the Crown. Volunteers stole across the Channel in increasing numbers to the aid of the Dutch, till the five hundred Englishmen who fought in the beginning of the struggle rose to a brigade of five thousand, whose bravery turned one of the most critical battles of the war. Dutch privateers found shelter in English ports, and English vessels hoisted the flag of the States for a dash at the Spanish traders. The Protestant fervour rose steadily as "the best captains and soldiers" returned from the campaigns in the Low Countries to tell of Alva's atrocities, or as privateers brought back tales of English seamen who had been seized in Spain and the New World, to linger amidst the tortures of the Inquisition, or to die in its fires. In the presence of this steady drift of popular passion the diplomacy of Elizabeth became of little moment. If the Queen was resolute for peace, England was resolute for war. A new daring had arisen since the beginning of her reign, when Cecil and the Queen stood alone in their belief in England's strength, and when the diplomatists of Europe regarded her obstinate defiance of Spain as "madness." The whole people had soon caught the self-confidence and daring of their Queen. Four years after her accession the seamen of the Southern coast were lending their aid to the Huguenots; and the Channel swarmed with "sea-dogs," as they were called, who accepted letters of marque from the Prince of Condé and the French Protestants, and took heed neither of the complaints of the French Court nor of Elizabeth's own efforts at repression. Her efforts failed before the connivance of every man along the coast, of the port-officers of the Crown itself, who made profit out of the spoil, and of the gentry of the West, who were hand and glove with the adventurers. The temporary suspension of the French contest only drove the sea-dogs to the West Indies; for the Papal decree which gave the New World to Spain, and the threats of Philip against any Protestant who should visit its seas, fell idly on

1572 to 1588

1572 to 1580 the ears of English seamen. It was in vain that their trading vessels were seized and the sailors flung into the dungeons of the Inquisition, "laden with irons, without sight of sun or moon." The profits of the trade were large enough to counteract its perils, and the bigotry of Philip was met by a bigotry as merciless as his own. Francis Drake, whose name became the terror of the Spanish Indies, was the son of a Protestant vicar in Kent, whose family had suffered for their religion in the time of the Six Articles; and his Puritanism went hand in hand with his love of adventure. To sell negroes to the planters, to kill Spaniards, to sack gold-ships was
1577 in the young seaman's mind the work of "the elect of God." He had conceived a daring design of penetrating into the Pacific, whose waters had never seen an English flag; and, backed by a company of adventurers, he set sail for the Southern seas in a vessel hardly as big as a Channel schooner, with a few yet smaller companions who fell away before the storms and perils of the voyage. But Drake with his one ship and eighty men held boldly on; and passing the Straits of Magellan, untraversed as yet by any Englishman, swept the unguarded coast of Chili and Peru, loaded his bark with the gold-dust and silver-ingots of Potosi, and with the pearls, emeralds, and diamonds which formed the cargo of the great galleon that sailed once a year from Lima to Cadiz.
1580 With spoils of above half-a-million in value the daring adventurer steered undauntedly for the Moluccas, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and after completing the circuit of the globe dropped anchor again in Plymouth harbour.

The Death of Mary Stuart

The romantic daring of Drake's voyage, and the vastness of the spoil, roused a general enthusiasm throughout England; but the welcome he received from Elizabeth on his return was accepted by Philip as an outrage which could only be expiated by war. The
1581 personal wrong was embittered in the year which followed by the persecution of the Jesuits, and by the outcry of the Catholic world against the King's selfish reluctance to avenge the blood of its martyrs. Sluggish as it was, his blood was fired at last by the defiance with which Elizabeth received all prayers for redress. She met his demand for Drake's surrender by knighting the freebooter, and by wearing in her crown the jewels he had offered her as a present. When the Spanish ambassador threatened that "matters would come to the cannon," she replied "quietly, in her most natural voice, as if she were telling a common story," wrote Mendoza, "that if I used threats of that kind she would fling me into a dungeon." It was in the same spirit that she rejected Philip's intercession on behalf of the Catholics, and for the relaxation of the oppressive laws against their worship. Outraged as he
1584 was, she believed that with Flanders still in revolt, and France longing for her alliance to enable it to seize the Low Countries, the King could not afford to quarrel with her; and her trust in his inactivity seemed justified by the jealousy with which he regarded, and succeeded in foiling, the project for a Catholic revolt which

was to have followed a descent of the Guises on the English coast. 1572 to 1588
But if Philip shielded Elizabeth from France, it was because he reserved England for his own ambition. The first vessels of the great fleet of invasion which was to take the name of the Armada were gathering slowly in the Tagus, when two remarkable events freed the King's hands for action by changing the face of European politics. The assassination of the Prince of Orange seemed to leave Flanders at his mercy, and the death of the Duke of Alençon left Henry of Navarre, the leader of the Huguenot party, heir of the crown of France. To prevent the triumph of heresy in the succession of a Protestant king, the Guises and the French Catholics rose at once in arms; but the Holy League which they formed rested mainly on the support of Philip. Philip therefore, so long as he supplied them with men and money, was secure on the side of France. At the same time the progress of his army under the Prince of Parma, and the divisions of the States after the loss of their great leader, promised a speedy reconquest of the Low Countries; and the fall of Antwerp after a gallant resistance convinced even Elizabeth of the need for action if the one "bridle to Spain which kept war out of our own gates" was to be saved. Lord Leicester was hurried to the Flemish coast with 8000 men; but their forced inaction was chequered only by a disastrous skirmish at Zutphen, the fight in which Sidney fell, while Elizabeth 1585
was vainly striving to negotiate a peace between Philip and the States. Meanwhile dangers thickened round her in England itself. Maddened by persecution, by the hopelessness of rebellion within or of deliverance from without, the fiercer Catholics listened to schemes of assassination, to which the murder of William of Orange lent at the moment a terrible significance. The detection of Somerville, a fanatic who had received the Host before setting out for London "to shoot the Queen with his dagg," was followed by measures of natural severity, by the flight and arrest of Catholic gentry and peers, by a vigorous purification of the Inns of Court, where a few Catholics lingered, and by the despatch of fresh batches of priests to the block. The trial and death of Parry, a member of the House of Commons who had served in the Queen's household, on a similar charge, brought the Parliament together in a transport of horror and loyalty. All Jesuits and seminary priests were banished from the realm on pain of death. A bill for the security of the Queen disqualified any claimant of the succession, who instigated subjects to rebellion or hurt to the Queen's person, from ever succeeding to the Crown. The threat was aimed at Mary Stuart. Weary of her long restraint, of her failure to rouse Philip or Scotland to aid her, of the baffled revolt of the English Catholics and the baffled intrigues of the Jesuits, she bent for a moment to submission. "Let me go," she wrote to Elizabeth; "let me retire from this island to some solitude where I may prepare my soul to die. Grant this and I will sign away every right which either I or mine can claim." But the cry was useless, and 1586

1572 to 1588 her despair found a new and more terrible hope in the plots against Elizabeth's life. She knew and approved the vow of Anthony Babington and a band of young Catholics, for the most part connected with the Royal household, to kill the Queen; but plot and approval alike passed through Walsingham's hands, and the seizure of Mary's correspondence revealed her guilt. In spite of her protests, a Commission of Peers sate as her judges at Fotheringay Castle; and their verdict of "guilty" annihilated under the provisions of the recent statute her claim to the Crown. The streets of London blazed with bonfires, and peals rang out from steeple to steeple at the news of her condemnation; but, in spite of the prayer of Parliament for her execution, and the pressure of the Council, Elizabeth shrank from her death. The force of public opinion, however, was now carrying all before it, and the unanimous demand of her people wrested at last a sullen consent from the Queen. She flung the warrant signed upon the floor, and the Council took on themselves the responsibility of executing it. Mary
1587 died on a scaffold which was erected in the castle-hall at Fotheringay, as dauntlessly as she had lived. "Do not weep," she said to her ladies, "I have given my word for you." "Tell my friends," she charged Melville, "that I die a good Catholic."

The Armada The blow was hardly struck before Elizabeth turned with fury on the ministers who had forced her hand. Burghley was for a while disgraced. Davison, who carried the warrant to the Council, was flung into the Tower to atone for an act which shattered the policy of the Queen. The death of Mary Stuart in fact removed the last obstacle out of Philip's way, by putting an end to the divisions of the English Catholics. To him, as to the nearest heir in blood who was of the Catholic Faith, Mary bequeathed her rights to the Crown, and the hopes of her adherents were from that moment bound up in the success of Spain. The presence of an English army in Flanders only convinced Philip that the road to the conquest of the States lay through England itself; and the operations of Parma in the Low Countries were suspended with a view to the greater enterprise. Vessels and supplies for the fleet which had for three years been gathering in the Tagus were collected from every port of the Spanish coast. It was time for Elizabeth to strike, and the news of the coming Armada called Drake again to sea. He had sailed a year before for the Indies at the head of twenty-five vessels; had requited the wrongs inflicted by the Inquisition on English seamen by plundering Vigo on his way; and avenged his disappointment at the escape of the gold fleet by the sack of Santiago, and by ravaging San Domingo and Carthagena. He now set sail again with thirty small barks, burnt the storeships and galleys in the harbour of Cadiz, stormed the ports of the Faro, and was only foiled in his aim of attacking the Armada itself by orders from home. A descent upon Corunna however completed what Drake called his "singeing of the Spanish King's beard." Elizabeth used the daring blow to back her negotiations for peace; but the Spanish

pride had been touched to the quick. Amidst the exchange of protocols Parma gathered thirty thousand men for the coming invasion, collected a fleet of flat-bottomed transports at Dunkirk, and waited impatiently for the Armada to protect his crossing. But the attack of Drake, the death of its first admiral, and the winter storms delayed the fleet from sailing till the spring; and it had hardly started when a gale in the Bay of Biscay drove its scattered vessels into Ferrol. It was only on the twenty-ninth of July that the sails of the Armada were seen from the Lizard, and the English beacons flared out their alarm along the coast. The news found England ready. An army was mustering under Leicester at Tilbury, the militia of the midland counties were gathering to London, while those of the south and east were held in readiness to meet a descent on either shore. Had Parma landed on the earliest day he purposed, he would have found his way to London barred by a force stronger than his own, a force too of men who had already crossed pikes on equal terms with his best infantry in Flanders. "When I shall have landed," he warned his master, "I must fight battle after battle, I shall lose men by wounds and disease, I must leave detachments behind me to keep open my communications; and in a short time the body of my army will become so weak that not only I may be unable to advance in the face of the enemy, and time may be given to the heretics and your Majesty's other enemies to interfere, but there may fall out some notable inconveniences, with the loss of everything, and I be unable to remedy it." Even had the Prince landed, in fact, the only real chance of Spanish success lay in a Catholic rising; and at this crisis patriotism proved stronger than religious fanaticism in the hearts of the English Catholics. Catholic gentry brought their vessels up alongside of Drake and Lord Howard, and Catholic lords led their tenantry to the muster at Tilbury. But to secure a landing at all, the Spaniards had to be masters of the Channel; and in the Channel lay an English fleet resolved to struggle hard for the mastery. As the Armada sailed on in a broad crescent past Plymouth, moving towards its point of junction with Parma at Dunkirk, the vessels which had gathered under Lord Howard of Effingham slipped out of the bay and hung with the wind upon their rear. In numbers the two forces were strangely unequal; the English fleet counted only 80 vessels against the 130 which composed the Armada. In size of ships the disproportion was even greater. Fifty of the English vessels, including the squadron of Lord Howard and the craft of the volunteers, were little bigger than yachts of the present day. Even of the thirty Queen's ships which formed its main body, there were only four which equalled in tonnage the smallest of the Spanish galleons. Sixty-five of these galleons formed the most formidable half of the Spanish fleet; and four galleasses, or gigantic galleys, armed with 50 guns apiece, fifty-six armed merchantmen, and twenty pinnaces, made up the rest. The Armada was provided

1572 to 1588

1588

1572 to 1588

with 2500 cannons, and a vast store of provisions; it had on board 8000 seamen and 20,000 soldiers; and if a court-favourite, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, had been placed at its head, he was supported by the ablest staff of naval officers which Spain possessed. Small, however, as the English ships were, they were in perfect trim; they sailed two feet for the Spaniards' one, they were manned with 9000 hardy seamen, and their Admiral was backed by a crowd of captains who had won fame in the Spanish seas. With him was Hawkins, who had been the first to break into the charmed circle of the Indies; Frobisher, the hero of the North-West passage; and above all Drake, who held command of the privateers. They had won too the advantage of the wind; and,

August 8th

closing in or drawing off as they would, the lightly-handled English vessels, which fired four shots to the Spaniards' one, hung boldly on the rear of the great fleet as it moved along the Channel. "The feathers of the Spaniard," in the phrase of the English seamen, were "plucked one by one." Galleon after galleon was sunk, boarded, driven on shore; and yet Medina Sidonia failed in bringing his pursuers to a close engagement. Now halting, now moving slowly on, the running fight between the two fleets lasted throughout the week, till the Armada dropped anchor in Calais roads. The time had now come for sharper work if the junction of the Armada with Parma was to be prevented; for, demoralized as the Spaniards had been by the merciless chase, their loss in ships had not been great, while the English supplies of food and ammunition were fast running out. Howard resolved to force an engagement; and, lighting eight fire-ships at midnight, sent them down with the tide upon the Spanish line. The galleons at once cut their cables, and stood out in panic to sea, drifting with the wind in a long line off Gravelines. Drake resolved at all costs to prevent their return. At dawn the English ships closed fairly in, and almost their last cartridge was spent ere the sun went down. Three great galleons had sunk, three had drifted helplessly on to the Flemish coast; but the bulk of the Spanish vessels remained, and even to Drake the fleet seemed "wonderful great and strong." Within the Armada itself however all hope was gone. Huddled together by the wind and the deadly English fire, their sails torn, their masts shot away, the crowded galleons had become mere slaughter-houses. Four thousand men had fallen, and bravely as the seamen fought they were cowed by the terrible butchery. Medina himself was in despair. "We are lost, Señor Oquenda," he cried to his bravest captain; "what are we to do?" "Let others talk of being lost," replied Oquenda, "your Excellency has only to order up fresh cartridge." But Oquenda stood alone, and a council of war resolved on retreat to Spain by the one course open, that of a circuit round the Orkneys. "Never anything pleased me better," wrote Drake, "than seeing the enemy fly with a southerly wind to the northwards. Have a good eye to the Prince of Parma, for, with the grace of God, if we like, I doubt not ere it be long so to

handle the matter with the Duke of Sidonia, as he shall wish himself at St. Mary Port among his orange trees." But the work of destruction was reserved for a mightier foe than Drake. Supplies fell short and the English vessels were forced to give up the chase; but the Spanish ships which remained had no sooner reached the Orkneys than the storms of the northern seas broke on them with a fury before which all concert and union disappeared. Fifty reached Corunna, bearing ten thousand men stricken with pestilence and death; of the rest some were sunk, some dashed to pieces against the Irish cliffs. The wreckers of the Orkneys and the Faroes, the clansmen of the Scottish Isles, the kernes of Donegal and Galway, all had their part in the work of murder and robbery. Eight thousand Spaniards perished between the Giant's Causeway and the Blaskets. On a strand near Sligo an English captain numbered eleven hundred corpses which had been cast up by the sea. The flower of the Spanish nobility, who had been sent on the new crusade under Alonzo da Leyva, after twice suffering shipwreck, put a third time to sea to founder on a reef near Dunluce. 1572 to 1588

The Armada sighted the English coast on July 19, 1588; the voyage up the Channel occupied nine days, and the decisive battle off Gravelines was fought on July 29. It was not the purpose of Medina Sidonia to engage the English in the Channel, except in so far as it was necessary to do so in order to secure his passage. On the whole, the Armada did not lose heavily until after the attack of the fire-ships at Calais.

SECTION VII.—THE ELIZABETHAN POETS

[*Authorities.*—A general account will be found in Jusserand, "Histoire Littéraire du Peuple anglais." Other works which may be mentioned are Sidney Lee, "Life of Shakespeare"; Ward, "History of English Literature"; and the "Dictionary of National Biography" for individuals. A full bibliography will be found in the "Cambridge History of Literature" (vol. iii.).]

The Elizabethan Poetry

We have already watched the shy revival of English letters during the earlier half of Elizabeth's reign. The general awakening of national life, the increase of wealth, of refinement and leisure, which marked that period, had been accompanied, as we have seen, by a quickening of English intelligence, which found vent in an upgrowth of grammar schools, in the new impulse given to classical learning at the Universities, in a passion for translations, which familiarized all England with the masterpieces of Italy and Greece, and above all in the crude but vigorous efforts of Sackville and Lyly after a nobler poetry and prose. But to these local and peculiar influences was to be added a more general influence, that of the restlessness and curiosity which characterized the age. The sphere of human interest was widened as it has never been widened before or since by the revelation of a new heaven and a new earth. It was only in the later years of the sixteenth century that the

discoveries of Copernicus were brought home to the general intelligence of the world by Kepler and Galileo, or that the daring of the Buccaneers broke through the veil which the greed of Spain had drawn across the New World of Columbus. Hardly inferior to these revelations as a source of poetic impulse was the sudden and picturesque way in which the various races of the world were brought face to face with one another through the universal passion for foreign travel. While the red tribes of the West were described by Amerigo Vespucci, and the strange civilization of Mexico and Peru disclosed by Cortez and Pizarro, the voyages of the Portuguese threw open the older splendours of the East, and the story of India and China was told for the first time to Christendom by Maffei and Mendoza. England took her full part in this work of discovery. Jenkinson, an English traveller, made his way to Bokhara. Willoughby brought back Muscovy to the knowledge of Western Europe. English mariners penetrated among the Esquimaux, or settled in Virginia. Drake circumnavigated the globe.
1582 The "Collection of Voyages," which was published by Hakluyt, not only disclosed the vastness of the world itself, but the infinite number of the races of mankind, the variety of their laws, their customs, their religions, their very instincts. We see the influence of this new and wider knowledge of the world, not only in the life and richness which it gave to the imagination of the time, but in the immense interest which from this moment attached itself to Man. Shakspere's conception of Caliban, as well as the questionings of Montaigne, mark the beginning of a new and a truer, because a more inductive, philosophy of human nature and human history. The fascination exercised by the study of human character showed itself in the essays of Bacon, and yet more in the wonderful popularity of the drama. And to these larger and world-wide sources of poetic powers was added in England, at the moment which we have reached in its story, the impulse which sprang from national triumph. The victory over the Armada, the deliverance from Spain, the rolling away of the Catholic terror which had hung like a cloud over the hopes of the new people, was like a passing from death into life. The whole aspect of England suddenly changed. As yet the interest of Elizabeth's reign had been political and material; the stage had been crowded with statesmen and warriors, with Cecils and Walsinghams and Drakes. Literature had hardly found a place in the glories of the time. But from the moment when the Armada drifted back broken to Ferrol the figures of warriors and statesmen were dwarfed by the grander figures of poets and philosophers. Amidst the throng in Elizabeth's antechamber the noblest form is that of the singer who lays the "Faerie Queen" at her feet, or of the young lawyer who muses amid the splendours of the presence over the problems of the "Novum Organon." The triumph at Cadiz, the conquest of Ireland, pass unheeded as we watch Hooker building up his "Ecclesiastical Polity" among the sheepfolds, or the genius of

Shakspere rising year by year into supremer grandeur in a rude theatre beside the Thames.

The full glory of the new literature broke on England with Edmund Spenser. We know little of his life; he was born in East London of poor parents, but connected with the Spencers of Althorpe, even then—as he proudly says—"a house of ancient fame." He studied as a sizar at Cambridge, and quitted the University while still a boy to live as a tutor in the north; but after some years of obscure poverty the scorn of a fair "Rosalind" drove him again southwards. A college friendship with Gabriel Harvey served to introduce him to Lord Leicester, who sent him as his envoy into France, and in whose service he first became acquainted with Leicester's nephew, Sir Philip Sidney. From Sidney's house at Penshurst came his earliest work, the "Shepherd's Calendar;" in form, like Sidney's own "Arcadia," a pastoral, where love and loyalty and Puritanism jostled oddly with the fancied shepherd life. The peculiar melody and profuse imagination which the pastoral disclosed at once placed its author in the forefront of living poets, but a far greater work was already in hand; and from some words of Gabriel Harvey's we see Spenser bent on rivalling Ariosto, and even hoping "to overgo" the "Orlando Furioso," in his "Elvish Queen." The ill-will or indifference of Burleigh, however, blasted the expectations he had drawn from the patronage of Sidney or the Earl of Leicester, and the favour with which he had been welcomed by the Queen. Sidney, himself in disgrace with Elizabeth, withdrew to Wilton to write the "Arcadia," by his sister's side; and "discontent of my long fruitless stay in princes' courts," the poet tells us, "and expectation vain of idle hopes," drove Spenser at last into exile. He followed Lord Grey as his secretary into Ireland, and remained there on the Deputy's recall in the enjoyment of an office and a grant of land from the forfeited estates of the Earl of Desmond. Spenser had thus enrolled himself among the colonists to whom England was looking at the time for the regeneration of Southern Ireland, and the practical interest he took in the "barren soil where cold and want and poverty do grow" was shown by the later publication of a prose tractate on the condition and government of the island. It was at Dublin or in his castle of Kilcolman, two miles from Doneraile, "under the foot of Mole, that mountain hoar," that he spent the memorable years in which Mary fell on the scaffold and the Armada came and went; and it was in the latter home that Walter Raleigh found him sitting "alwaies idle," as it seemed to his restless friend, "among the cooly shades of the green alders by the Mulla's shore," in a visit made memorable by the poem of "Colin Clout's come Home again." But in the "idlesse" and solitude of the poet's exile the great work begun in the two pleasant years of his stay at Penshurst had at last taken form, and it was to publish the first three books of the "Faerie Queen" that Spenser returned in Raleigh's company to London.

Spenser 1552

1579

1580

1590

The Faerie Queen

The appearance of the "Faerie Queen" is the one critical event in the annals of English poetry; it settled, in fact, the question whether there was to be such a thing as English poetry or no. The older national verse which had blossomed and died in Caedmon sprang suddenly into a grander life in Chaucer, but it closed again in a yet more complete death. Across the Border, indeed, the Scotch poets of the fifteenth century preserved something of their master's vivacity and colour, and in England itself the Italian poetry of the Renascence had of late found echoes in Surrey and Sidney. The new English drama too, as we shall presently see, was beginning to display its wonderful powers, and the work of Marlowe had already prepared the way for the work of Shakspere. But bright as was the promise of coming song, no great imaginative poem had broken the silence of English literature for nearly two hundred years when Spenser landed at Bristol with the "Faerie Queen." From that moment the stream of English poetry has flowed on without a break. There have been times, as in the years which immediately followed, when England has "become a nest of singing birds;" there have been times when song was scant and poor; but there never has been a time when England was wholly without a singer. The new English verse has been true to the source from which it sprang, and Spenser has always been "the poet's poet." But in his own day he was the poet of England at large. The "Faerie Queen" was received with a burst of general welcome. It became "the delight of every accomplished gentleman, the model of every poet, the solace of every soldier." The poem expressed, indeed, the very life of the time. It was with a true poetic instinct that Spenser fell back for the framework of his story on the faery world of Celtic romance, whose wonder and mystery had in fact become the truest picture of the wonder and mystery of the world around him. In the age of Cortez and of Raleigh dreamland had ceased to be dreamland, and no marvel or adventure that befell lady or knight was stranger than the tales which weather-beaten mariners from the Southern Seas were telling every day to grave merchants upon 'Change. The very incongruities of the story of Arthur and his knighthood, strangely as it had been built up out of the rival efforts of bard and jongleur and priest, made it the fittest vehicle for the expression of the world of incongruous feeling which we call the Renascence. To modern eyes perhaps there is something grotesque in the strange medley of figures which crowd the canvas of the "Faerie Queen," in its fauns dancing on the sward where knights have hurtled together, in its alternation of the salvage-men from the New World with the satyrs of classic mythology, in the giants, dwarfs, and monsters of popular fancy, who jostle with the nymphs of Greek legend and the damosels of mediæval romance. But, strange as the medley is, it reflects truly enough the stranger medley of warring ideals and irreconcileable impulses which made up the life of Spenser's contemporaries. It was not in the "Faerie Queen" only, but in the

world which it pourtrayed, that the religious mysticism of the Middle Ages stood face to face with the intellectual freedom of the Revival of Letters, that asceticism and self-denial cast their spell on imaginations glowing with the sense of varied and inexhaustible existence, that the dreamy and poetic refinement of feeling which expressed itself in the fanciful unrealities of chivalry co-existed with the rough practical energy that sprang from an awakening sense of human power, or the lawless extravagance of an idealized friendship and love with the moral sternness and elevation which England was drawing from the Reformation and the Bible. But strangely contrasted as are the elements of the poem, they are harmonized by the calmness and serenity which is the note of the "Faerie Queen." The world of the Renascence is around us, but it is ordered, refined, and calmed by the poet's touch. The warmest scenes which he borrows from the Italian verse of his day are idealized into purity; the very struggle of the men around him is lifted out of its pettier accidents, and raised into a spiritual oneness with the struggle in the soul itself. There are allusions in plenty to contemporary events, but the contest between Elizabeth and Mary takes ideal form in that of Una and the false Duessa, and the clash of arms between Spain and the Huguenots comes to us faint and hushed through the serener air. The verse, like the story, rolls on as by its own natural power, without haste or effort or delay. The gorgeous colouring, the profuse and often complex imagery which Spenser's imagination lavishes, leave no sense of confusion in the reader's mind. Every figure, strange as it may be, is seen clearly and distinctly as it passes by. It is in this calmness, this serenity, this spiritual elevation of the "Faerie Queen," that we feel the new life of the coming age moulding into ordered and harmonious form the life of the Renascence. Both in its conception, and in the way in which this conception is realized in the portion of his work which Spenser completed, his poem strikes the note of the coming Puritanism. In his earlier pastoral, the "Shepherd's Calendar," the poet had boldly taken his part with the more advanced reformers against the Church policy of the Court. He had chosen Archbishop Grindal, who was then in disgrace for his Puritan sympathies, as his model of a Christian pastor; and attacked with sharp invective the pomp of the higher clergy. His "Faerie Queen," in its religious theory, is Puritan to the core. The worst foe of its "Red-cross Knight" is the false and scarlet-clad Duessa of Rome, who parts him for a while from Truth and leads him to the house of Ignorance. Spenser presses strongly and pitilessly for the execution of Mary Stuart. No bitter word ever breaks the calm of his verse save when it touches on the perils with which Catholicism was environing England, perils before which his knight must fall "were not that Heavenly Grace doth him uphold and steadfast Truth acquite him out of all." But it is yet more in the temper and aim of his work that we catch the nobler and

deeper tones of English Puritanism. In his earlier musings at Penshurst the poet had purposed to surpass Ariosto, but the gaiety of Ariosto's song is utterly absent from his own. Not a ripple of laughter breaks the calm surface of Spenser's verse. He is habitually serious, and the seriousness of his poetic tone reflects
1583 the seriousness of his poetic purpose. His aim, he tells us, was to represent the moral virtues, to assign to each its knightly patron, so that its excellence might be expressed and its contrary vice trodden under foot by deeds of arms and chivalry. In knight after knight of the twelve he purposed to paint, he wished to embody some single virtue of the virtuous man in its struggle with the faults and errors which specially beset it; till in Arthur, the sum of the whole company, man might have been seen perfected, in his longing and progress towards the "Faerie Queen," the Divine Glory which is the true end of human effort. The largeness of his culture indeed, his exquisite sense of beauty, and above all the very intensity of his moral enthusiasm, saved Spenser from the narrowness and exaggeration which often distorted goodness into unloveliness in the Puritan. Christian as he is to the core, his Christianity is enriched and fertilized by the larger temper of the Renascence, as well as by a poet's love of the natural world in which the older mythologies struck their roots. Diana and the gods of heathendom take a sacred tinge from the purer sanctities of the new faith; and in one of the greatest songs of the "Faerie Queen," the conception of love widens, as it widened in the mind of a Greek, into the mighty thought of the productive energy of Nature. Spenser borrows in fact the delicate and refined forms of the Platonist philosophy to express his own moral enthusiasm. Not only does he love, as others have loved, all that is noble and pure and of good report, but he is fired as none before or after him have been fired with a passionate sense of moral beauty. Justice, Temperance, Truth, are no mere names to him, but real existences to which his whole nature clings with a rapturous affection. Outer beauty he believed to spring, and loved because it sprang, from the beauty of the soul within. There was much in such a moral protest as this to rouse dislike in any age, but it is the glory of the age of Elizabeth that, "mad world" as in many ways it was, all that was noble welcomed the "Faerie Queen." Elizabeth herself, says Spenser, "to mine oaten pipe inclined her ear," and bestowed a pension on the poet. He soon returned to Ireland to commemorate his marriage in Sonnets and the most beautiful of bridal songs,
1595 and to complete three more books of his poem amongst love and poverty and troubles from his Irish neighbours. Trouble was, indeed, soon to take a graver form. Spenser was still at work on the "Faerie Queen" when the Irish discontent broke into revolt, and the poet escaped from his burning house to fly to England, and
1599 to die broken-hearted, it may be—as Jonson says—"for want of bread," in an inn at Westminster.

If the "Faerie Queen" expressed the higher elements of the

Elizabethan age, the whole of that age, its lower elements and its higher alike, was expressed in the English drama. We have already pointed out the circumstances which everywhere throughout Europe were giving a poetic impulse to the newly-aroused intelligence of men, and it is remarkable that this impulse everywhere took a dramatic shape. The artificial French tragedy which began about this time with Garnier, was not, indeed, destined to exert any influence over English poetry till a later age; but the influence of the Italian comedy, which had begun half a century earlier with Machiavelli and Ariosto, was felt directly through the Novelle, or stories, which served as plots for the dramatists. It left its stamp, indeed, on some of the worst characteristics of the English stage. The features of our drama that startled the moral temper of the time and won the deadly hatred of the Puritan, its grossness and profanity, its tendency to scenes of horror and crime, its profuse employment of cruelty and lust as grounds of dramatic action, its daring use of the horrible and the unnatural whenever they enable it to display the more terrible and revolting sides of human passion, were derived from the Italian stage. It is doubtful how much the English playwrights may have owed to the Spanish drama, that under Lope and Cervantes sprang suddenly into a grandeur which almost rivalled their own. In the intermixture of tragedy and comedy, in the abandonment of the solemn uniformity of poetic diction for the colloquial language of real life, the use of unexpected incidents, the complications of their plots and intrigues, the dramas of England and Spain are remarkably alike; but the likeness seems rather to have sprung from a similarity in the circumstances to which both owed their rise, than to any direct connexion of the one with the other. The real origin of the English drama, in fact, lay not in any influence from without, but in the influence of England itself. The temper of the nation was dramatic. Ever since the Reformation, the Palace, the Inns of Court, and the University had been vyeing with one another in the production of plays; and so early was their popularity, that even under Henry the Eighth it was found necessary to create a "Master of the Revels" to supervise them. Every progress of Elizabeth from shire to shire was a succession of shows and interludes. Dian with her nymphs met the Queen as she returned from hunting; Love presented her with his golden arrow as she passed through the gates of Norwich. From the earlier years of her reign, the new spirit of the Renascence had been pouring itself into the rough mould of the Mystery Plays, whose allegorical virtues and vices, or scriptural heroes and heroines, had handed on the spirit of the drama through the Middle Ages. Adaptations from classical pieces soon began to alternate with the purely religious "Moralities;" and an attempt at a livelier style of expression and invention appeared in the popular comedy of 'Gammer Gurton's Needle;" while Sackville, Lord Dorset, in his tragedy of "Gorboduc" made a bold effort at sublimity of diction, and introduced the use of blank verse as the vehicle of dramatic

The Elizabethan Drama

dialogue. But it was not to these tentative efforts of scholars and nobles that the English stage was really indebted for the amazing outburst of genius, which dates from the moment when "the Earl
1576 of Leicester's servants" erected the first public theatre in Blackfriars. It was the people itself that created its Stage. The theatre, indeed, was commonly only the courtyard of an inn, or a mere booth such as is still seen at a country fair; the bulk of the audience sate beneath the open sky in the "pit" or yard, a few covered seats in the galleries which ran round it formed the boxes of the wealthier spectators, while patrons and nobles found seats upon the actual boards. All the appliances were of the roughest sort: a few flowers served to indicate a garden, crowds and armies were represented by a dozen scene-shifters with swords and bucklers, heroes rode in and out on hobby-horses, and a scroll on a post told whether the scene was at Athens or London. There were no female actors, and the grossness which startles us in words which fell from women's lips took a different colour when every woman's part was acted by a boy. But difficulties such as these were more than compensated by the popular character of the drama itself. Rude as the theatre might be, all the world was there. The stage was crowded with nobles and courtiers. Apprentices and citizens thronged the benches in the yard below. The rough mob of the pit inspired, as it felt, the vigorous life, the rapid transitions, the passionate energy, the reality, the lifelike medley and confusion, the racy dialogue, the chat, the wit, the pathos, the sublimity, the rant and buffoonery, the coarse horrors and vulgar bloodshedding, the immense range over all classes of society, the intimacy with the foulest as well as the fairest developments of human temper, which characterized the English stage. The new drama represented "the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure." The people itself brought its nobleness and its vileness to the boards. No stage was ever so human, no poetic life so intense. Wild, reckless, defiant of all past tradition, of all conventional laws, the English dramatists owned no teacher, no source of poetic inspiration, but the people itself.

The Earlier Dramatists

Few events in our literary history are so startling as this sudden rise of the Elizabethan drama. The first public theatre, as we have seen, was erected only in the middle of the Queen's reign. Before the close of it eighteen theatres existed in London alone. Fifty dramatic poets, many of the first order, appeared in the fifty years which precede the closing of the theatres by the Puritans; and great as is the number of their works which have perished, we still possess a hundred dramas, all written within this period, and of which at least a half are excellent. A glance at their authors shows us that the intellectual quickening of the age had now reached the mass of the people. Almost all of the new playwrights were fairly educated, and many were University men. But, instead of courtly singers of the Sidney and Spenser sort, we see the advent of the
1587 "poor scholar." The earlier dramatists, such as Nash, Peele, Kyd,

Greene, or Marlowe, were for the most part poor, and reckless in their poverty; wild livers, defiant of law or common fame, in revolt against the usages and religion of their day, "atheists" in general repute, "holding Moses for a juggler," haunting the brothel and the alehouse, and dying starved or in tavern brawls. But with their appearance began the Elizabethan drama. The few plays which have reached us of an earlier date are either cold imitations of the classical and Italian comedy, or rude farces like "Ralph Roister Doister," or tragedies such as "Gorboduc," where, poetic as occasional passages may be, there is little promise of dramatic development. But in the year which preceded the coming of the Armada the whole aspect of the stage suddenly changes, and the new dramatists range themselves around two men of very different genius, Robert Greene and Christopher Marlowe. Of Greene, as the creator of our lighter English prose, we have already spoken. But his work as a poet was of yet greater importance. No figure better paints the group of young playwrights. He left Cambridge to travel through Italy and Spain, and to bring back the debauchery of the one and the scepticism of the other. In the words of remorse he wrote before his death he paints himself as a drunkard and a roysterer, winning money only by ceaseless pamphlets and plays to waste it on wine and women, and drinking the cup of life to the dregs. Hell and the after-world were the butts of his ceaseless mockery. If he had not feared the judges of the Queen's Courts more than he feared God, he said, in bitter jest, he should often have turned cutpurse. He married, and loved his wife, but she was soon deserted; and the wretched profligate found himself again plunged into excesses which he loathed, though he could not live without them. But wild as was the life of Greene, his pen was pure. He is steadily on virtue's side in the love pamphlets and novelettes he poured out in endless succession, and whose plots were dramatized by the school which gathered round him. His keen perception of character and the relations of social life, the playfulness of his fancy, and the liveliness of his style exerted an influence on his contemporaries hardly inferior to that of Marlowe. The life of Marlowe was as riotous, his scepticism even more daring, than the life and scepticism of Greene. His early death alone saved him, in all probability, from a prosecution for atheism. He was charged with calling Moses a juggler, and with boasting that, if he undertook to write a new religion, it should be a better religion than the Christianity he saw around him. But in a far higher degree than Greene he is the creator of the English drama. Born at the opening of Elizabeth's reign, the son of a 1564
Canterbury shoemaker, but educated at Cambridge, Marlowe burst on the world, in the year which preceded the triumph over the Armada, with a play which at once wrought a revolution in the English stage. Bombastic and extravagant as it was, and extravagance reached its height in the scene where captive kings, the "pampered jades of Asia," drew their conqueror's car across the

stage, "Tamburlaine" not only indicated the revolt of the new drama against the timid inanities of Euphuism, but gave an earnest of that imaginative daring, the secret of which Marlowe was to bequeath to the playwrights who followed him. He perished at
1593 thirty in a shameful brawl, but in his brief career he had struck the grander notes of the coming drama. His Jew of Malta was the herald of Shylock. He opened in "Edward the Second" the series of historical plays which gave us "Cæsar" and "Richard the Third." Riotous, grotesque, and full of a mad thirst for pleasure as it is, his "Faustus" was the first dramatic attempt to touch the great problem of the relations of man to the unseen world, to paint the power of doubt in a temper leavened with superstition, the daring of human defiance in a heart abandoned to despair. Rash, unequal, stooping even to the ridiculous in his cumbrous and vulgar buffoonery, there is a force in Marlowe, a conscious grandeur of tone, a range of passion, which sets him above all his contemporaries save one. In the higher qualities of imagination, as in the majesty and sweetness of his "mighty line," he is inferior to Shakspere alone.

Shakspere

A few daring jests, a brawl and a fatal stab, make up the life of Marlowe, but even details such as these are wanting to the life of William Shakspere. Of hardly any great poet, indeed, do we know so little. For the story of his youth we have only one or two trifling legends, and these almost certainly false. Not a single letter or characteristic saying, not one of the jests "spoken at the Mermaid," hardly a single anecdote, remain to illustrate his busy life in London. His look and figure in later age have been preserved by the bust over his tomb at Stratford, and a hundred years after his death he was still remembered in his native town; but the minute diligence of the enquirers of the Georgian time was able to glean hardly a single detail, even of the most trivial order, which could throw light upon the years of retirement before his death. It is owing perhaps to the harmony and unity of his temper that no salient peculiarity seems to have left its trace on the memory of his contemporaries; it is the very grandeur of his genius which precludes us from discovering any personal trait in his works. His supposed self-revelation in the Sonnets is so obscure that only a few outlines can be traced even by the boldest conjecture. In his dramas he is all his characters, and his characters range over all mankind. There is not one, or the act or word of one, that we can identify personally with the poet himself.

1564 He was born in the sixth year of Elizabeth's reign, twelve years after the birth of Spenser, three years later than the birth of Bacon. Marlowe was of the same age with Shakspere: Greene probably a few years older. His father, a glover and small farmer of Stratford-on-Avon, was forced by poverty to lay down his office of alderman, as his son reached boyhood; and the stress of poverty may have been the cause which drove William Shakspere, who was already
1587? married at eighteen to a wife older than himself, to London and

the stage. His life in the capital is said (but the statement is mere guesswork) to have begun in his twenty-third year, the memorable year which followed Sidney's death, which preceded the coming of the Armada, and which witnessed the production of Marlowe's "Tamburlaine." If we take the language of the Sonnets as a record of his personal feeling, his new profession as an actor stirred in him only the bitterness of self-contempt. He chides with Fortune, "that did not better for my life provide than public means that public manners breed;" he writhes at the thought that he has "made himself a motley to the view" of the gaping apprentices in the pit of Blackfriars. "Thence comes it," he adds, "that my name receives a brand, and almost thence my nature is subdued to that it works in." But the application of the words is a more than doubtful one. In spite of petty squabbles with some of his dramatic rivals at the outset of his career, the genial nature of the newcomer seems to have won him a general love among his fellow-actors. In his early years, while still a mere fitter of old plays for the stage, a fellow-playwright, Chettle, answered Greene's attack on him in words of honest affection: "Myself have seen his demeanor no less civil, than he excellent in the quality he professes: besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty; and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art." His partner Burbage spoke of him after death as a "worthy friend and fellow;" and Jonson handed down the general tradition of his time when he described him as "indeed honest, and of an open and free nature."

His profession as an actor was at any rate of essential service to him in the poetic career which he soon undertook. Not only did it give him the sense of theatrical necessities which makes his plays so effective on the boards, but it enabled him to bring his pieces as he wrote them to the test of the stage. If there is any truth in Jonson's statement that Shakspere never blotted a line, there is no justice in the censure which it implies on his carelessness or incorrectness. The conditions of poetic publication were in fact wholly different from those of our own day. A drama remained for years in manuscript as an acting piece, subject to continual revision and amendment; and every rehearsal and representation afforded hints for change, which we know the young poet was far from neglecting. The chance which has preserved an earlier edition of his "Hamlet" shows in what an unsparing way Shakspere could recast even the finest products of his genius. Five years after the supposed date of his arrival in London, he was already famous as a dramatist. Greene speaks bitterly of him, under the name of "Shakescene," as an "upstart crow beautified with our feathers," a sneer which points to a time when the young author was preparing himself for loftier flights by fitting older pieces of his predecessors for the stage. He was soon partner in the theatre, actor, and playwright; and another nickname, that of "Johannes Factotum," or Jack-of-all-Trades, shows his readiness to take

all honest work which came to hand. "Pericles" and "Titus Andronicus" are probably instances of almost worthless but popular plays touched up with a few additions from Shakspere's pen; and of the Second and Third Parts of "Henry the Sixth" only about a third can be traced to him. The death scene of Cardinal Beaufort, though chosen by Reynolds in his famous picture as specially Shaksperian, is taken bodily from some older dramatist, Marlowe perhaps or Peele, whom Shakspere was adapting for the stage.

1593 to 1598

With the poem of "Venus and Adonis," "the first heir of my invention," as he calls it, the period of independent creation fairly began. The date of its publication was a very memorable one. The "Faerie Queen" had appeared only three years before, and had placed Spenser, without a rival, at the head of English poetry. On the other hand, the two leading dramatists of the time passed at this moment suddenly away. Greene died in poverty and self-reproach in the house of a poor shoemaker. "Doll," he wrote to the wife he had abandoned, "I charge thee, by the love of our youth and by my soul's rest, that thou wilt see this man paid; for if he and his wife had not succoured me, I had died in the streets." "Oh, that a year were granted me to live," cried the young poet from his bed of death—"but I must die, of every man abhorred! Time, loosely spent, will not again be won! My time is loosely spent—and I undone!" A year later, the death of Marlowe in a street brawl removed the only rival whose powers might have equalled Shakspere's own. He was now about thirty; and the twenty-three years which elapsed between the appearance of the "Adonis" and his death were filled with a series of masterpieces. Nothing is more characteristic of his genius than its incessant activity. Throughout the whole of this period he produced on an average two dramas a year, and this in addition to the changes and transformations he effected in those already brought on the stage. When we attempt, however, to trace the growth and progress of the poet's mind in the order of his plays we are met, at least in the case of many of them, by an absence of any real information as to the dates of their appearance, which is hardly compensated by the guesses of later enquirers. The facts on which conjecture has to build are indeed extremely few. "Venus and Adonis," with the "Lucrece," must have been written before their publication in 1593-4; the Sonnets, though not published till 1609, were known in some form among his private friends as early as 1598. His earlier plays are defined by a list given in the "Wit's Treasury" of Francis Meres in 1598, though the omission of a play from a casual catalogue of this kind would hardly warrant us in assuming its necessary non-existence at the time. The works ascribed to him at his death are fixed, in the same approximate fashion, through the edition published by his fellow-actors. Beyond these meagre facts, and our knowledge of the publication of a few of his dramas in his lifetime, all is uncertain; and the conclusions

which have been drawn from these, and from the dramas themselves, as well as from assumed resemblances with, or references to, other plays of the period can only be accepted as rough approximations to the truth. His lighter comedies and historical dramas can be assigned with fair probability to the period between 1593, when he was known as nothing more than an adapter, and 1598, when they are mentioned in the list of Meres. They bear on them indeed the stamp of youth. In "Love's Labour's Lost," the young playwright quizzes the verbal wit and high-flown extravagance of thought and phrase which Euphues had made fashionable in the court world of the time; his fun breaks almost riotously out in the practical jokes of the "Taming of the Shrew" and the endless blunderings of the "Comedy of Errors." His work is as yet marked by little poetic elevation, or by passion; but the easy grace of the dialogue, the dexterous management of a complicated story, the genial gaiety of his tone, and the music of his verse, placed Shakspere at once at the head of his fellows as a master of social comedy. In the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," which followed, perhaps, these earlier efforts, his painting of manners is suffused by a tenderness and ideal beauty, which formed an effective protest against the hard though vigorous character-painting which the first success of Ben Jonson in "Every Man in his Humour" brought at the time into fashion. Quick on these lighter comedies followed two, in which his genius started fully into life. His poetic power, held in reserve till now, showed itself with a splendid profusion in the brilliant fancies of the "Midsummer Night's Dream;" and passion swept like a tide of resistless delight through "Romeo and Juliet." Side by side however with these delicate imaginings and piquant sketches of manners, had been appearing during this short interval of intense activity his historical dramas. No plays seem to have been more popular, from the earliest hours of the new stage, than dramatic representations of our history. Marlowe had shown in his "Edward the Second" what tragic grandeur could be reached in this favourite field; and, as we have seen, Shakspere had been led naturally towards it by his earlier occupation as an adapter of stock pieces like "Henry the Sixth" for the new requirements of the stage. He still to some extent followed in plan the older plays on the subjects he selected, but in his treatment of their themes he shook boldly off the yoke of the past. A larger and deeper conception of human character than any of the old dramatists had reached displayed itself in Richard the Third, in Falstaff, or in Hotspur; while in Constance and Richard the Second the pathos of human suffering was painted as even Marlowe had never dared to paint it. No dramas have done more for his enduring popularity with the mass of Englishmen than these historical plays of Shakspere; echoing sometimes, as they do, much of our national prejudice and unfairness of temper—(as in his miserable caricature of Joan of Arc)—but instinct throughout with English humour, with an English love of hard

fighting, an English faith in the doom that waits upon triumphant evil, an English pity for the fallen.

1598 to 1608

Whether as a tragedian or as a writer of social comedy, Shakspere had now passed far beyond his fellows. "The Muses," said Meres, "would speak with Shakspere's fine filed phrase, if they would speak English." His personal popularity was at its height. His pleasant temper, and the vivacity of his wit, had drawn him early into contact with the young Earl of Southampton, to whom his "Adonis" and "Lucrece" are dedicated; and the different tone of the two dedications shows how rapidly acquaintance ripened into an ardent friendship. It is probably to Southampton that the earlier Sonnets were addressed during this period, while others may have been written in the character of his friend during the quickly changing phases of the Earl's adventurous life. His wealth, too, was growing fast. A year after the appearance of his two poems the dramatic company at Blackfriars, in which he was a partner as well as actor, built their new theatre of the Globe on the Bankside; and four years later he was rich enough to aid his father, and buy the house at Stratford which afterwards became his home. The tradition that Elizabeth was so pleased with Falstaff in "Henry the Fourth" that she ordered the poet to show her Falstaff in love—an order which produced the "Merry Wives of Windsor"—whether true or false, shows his repute as a playwright. As the group of earlier poets passed away, they found successors in Marston, Dekker, Middleton, Heywood, and Chapman, and above all in Ben Jonson. But none of these could dispute the supremacy of Shakspere. The verdict of Meres in 1598, that "Shakspere among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage," represented the general feeling of his contemporaries. He was fully master at last of the resources of his art. The "Merchant of Venice" marks the perfection of his development as a dramatist in the completeness of its stage effect, the ingenuity of its incidents, the ease of its movement, the poetic beauty of its higher passages, the reserve and self-control with which its poetry is used, the conception and development of character, and above all the mastery with which character and event is grouped round the figure of Shylock. But the poet's temper is still young; the "Merry Wives of Windsor" is a burst of gay laughter; and laughter more tempered, yet full of a sweeter fascination, rings round us in "As You Like it." But in the melancholy and meditative Jaques of the last drama we feel the touch of a new and graver mood. Youth, so full and buoyant in the poet till now, seems to have passed almost suddenly away. Shakspere had nearly reached forty; and in one of his Sonnets, which cannot have been written at a much later time than this, there are indications that he already felt the advance of premature age. The outer world suddenly darkened around him; the brilliant circle of young nobles whose friendship he had shared was broken up by the political storm which burst in the mad struggle of the Earl of Essex for power.

Essex himself fell on the scaffold; his friend and Shakspere's idol, Southampton, passed a prisoner into the Tower; Herbert, Lord Pembroke, the poet's younger patron, was banished from Court. 1601
Hard as it is to read the riddle of the Essex rising, we know that to some of the younger and more chivalrous minds of the age it seemed a noble effort to rescue England from intriguers who were gathering round the Queen; and in this effort Shakspere seems to have taken part. The production of a play of "Richard the Second" at the theatre was one of the means adopted by the conspirators to prepare the nation for the revolution they contemplated; and the suspension of the players, on the suppression of the revolt, marks the Government's opinion as to the way their sympathies had gone. While friends were thus falling and hopes fading without, the poet's own mind seems to have been going through a phase of bitter suffering and unrest. In spite of the ingenuity of commentators, it is difficult and even impossible to derive any knowledge of Shakspere's inner history from the Sonnets; "the strange imagery of passion which passes over the magic mirror," it has been finely said, "has no tangible evidence before or behind it;" but its mere passing is itself an evidence of the restlessness and agony within. The change in the character of his dramas gives a surer indication of his change of mood. "There seems to have been a period in Shakspere's life," says Mr. Hallam, "when his heart was ill at ease, and ill content with the world and his own conscience; the memory of hours misspent, the pang of affection misplaced or unrequited, the experience of man's worser nature which intercourse with unworthy associates by choice or circumstances peculiarly teaches, these as they sank down into the depth of his great mind seem not only to have inspired into it the conception of Lear or Timon, but that of one primary character —the censurer of mankind. This type is first seen in the philosophic melancholy of Jaques, gazing with an undiminished serenity 1602
and with a gaiety of fancy, though not of manners, on the follies of the world. It assumes a graver cast in the exiled Duke of the same play, and next one rather more severe in the Duke in 'Measure for Measure.' In all these, however, it is merely contemplative philosophy. In Hamlet this is mingled with the impulses of a perturbed heart under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances; it shines no longer, as in the former characters, with a steady light, but plays in fitful coruscations amidst feigned gaiety and extravagance. In Lear it is the flash of sudden inspiration across the incongruous imagery of madness; in Timon it is obscured by the exaggeration of misanthropy."

The "obstinate questionings" of invisible things which had 1608 to 1616
given their philosophical cast to the wonderful group of dramas which had at last raised Shakspere to his post among the greatest of the world's poets, still hung round him in the years of quiet retirement which preceded his death. The wealth he had amassed as actor, stage-proprietor, and author enabled him to purchase a

handsome property at Stratford, the home of his youth, which, if we may trust tradition, he had never failed to visit once a year since he left it to seek his fortune on the London boards. His last dramas, "Cymbeline," the "Tempest," "Winter's Tale," and "Henry VIII.," were written in the midst of ease and competence, in the home where he lived as a country gentleman with his wife and daughters. His classical plays were the last assertion of an age which was passing away. The spirit of the Renascence was fading before the spirit of the Reformation. Puritanism was hardening and narrowing, while it was invigorating and ennobling, life by its stern morality, its seriousness, its conviction of the omnipotence of God and of the weakness of man. The old daring which had turned England into a people of "adventurers," the sense of inexhaustible resources in the very nature of man, the buoyant freshness of youth, the intoxicating sense of beauty and joy, which had created Drake and Sidney and Marlowe, were dying with Shakspere himself. The Bible was superseding Plutarch. The pedantry of Euphuism was giving way to the pedantry of Scriptural phrases. The "obstinate questionings" of invisible things, which haunted the finer minds of the Renascence, were being stereotyped into the theological formulas of the Predestinarian. A new political world, healthier, more really national, but less picturesque, less wrapt in the mystery and splendour which poets love, was rising with the new moral world. Rifts which were still little were widening hour by hour, and threatening ruin to the great fabric of Church and State, which Elizabeth had built up, and to which the men of the Renascence clung passionately. From all this new world of feeling and action Shakspere stood utterly aloof. Of the popular tendencies of Puritanism—and great as were its faults, Puritanism may fairly claim to be the first political system which recognized the grandeur of the people as a whole—Shakspere knew nothing. In his earlier dramas he had reflected the common faith of his age in the grandeur of Kingship as the one national centre; in his later plays he represents the aristocratic view of social life which was shared by all the nobler spirits of the Elizabethan time. Coriolanus is the embodiment of a great noble; and the reiterated taunts which he hurls in play after play at the rabble only echo the general temper of the Renascence. Nor were the spiritual sympathies of the poet those of the coming time. While the world was turning more and more to the speculations of theology, man and man's nature remained to the last the one inexhaustible subject of interest with Shakspere, as it had been with his favourite Montaigne. Caliban was his latest creation. It is impossible to discover whether his faith, if faith there were, was Catholic or Protestant. It is difficult, indeed, to say whether he had any religious belief or no. The religious phrases which are thinly scattered over his works are little more than expressions of a distant and imaginative reverence. And on the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is significant. He is

silent, and the doubt of Hamlet deepens his silence, about the after-world. "To die," it may be, was to him as to Claudio, "to go we know not where." Often, at any rate, as his "questionings" turn to the riddle of life and death, he leaves it a riddle to the last, without heeding the common theological solutions around him. "We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded by a sleep."

The Later Dramatists

The contrast between the spirit of the Elizabethan drama and the new temper of the nation became yet stronger when the death of Shakspere left the sovereignty of the English stage to Ben Jonson. Jonson retained it almost to the moment when the drama itself perished in the storm of the Civil War. Webster and Ford, indeed, surpassed him in tragic grandeur, Massinger in facility and grace, Beaumont and Fletcher in poetry and inventiveness; but in the breadth of his dramatic quality, his range over every kind of poetic excellence, Jonson was excelled by Shakspere alone. His life retained to the last the riotous, defiant colour of the earlier dramatic world, in which he had made his way to fame. The step-son of a bricklayer, then a poor Cambridge scholar, he enlisted as a volunteer in the wars of the Low Countries, killed his man in single combat in sight of both armies, and returned at nineteen to London to throw himself on the stage for bread. At forty-five he was still so vigorous that he made his way to Scotland on foot. Even in old age his "mountain belly," his scarred face, and massive frame became famous among the men of a younger time, as they gathered at the "Mermaid" to listen to his wit, his poetry, his outbursts of spleen and generosity, of delicate fancy, of pedantry, of riotous excess. His entry on the stage was marked by a proud resolve to reform it. Already a fine scholar in early manhood, and disdainful of writers who, like Shakspere, "had small Latin and less Greek," Jonson aimed at a return to classic severity, to a severer criticism and taste. He blamed the extravagance which marked the poetry around him, he studied his plots, he gave symmetry and regularity to his sentences and conciseness to his phrase. But creativeness disappears: in his social comedies we are amongst qualities and types rather than men, among abstractions and not characters. His comedy is no genial reflection of life as it is, but a moral, satirical effort to reform manners. It is only his wonderful grace and real poetic feeling that lightens all this pedantry. He shares the vigour and buoyancy of life which distinguished the school from which he sprang. His stage is thronged with figures. In spite of his talk about correctness, his own extravagance is only saved from becoming ridiculous by his amazing force. If he could not create characters, his wealth of striking details gave life to the types which he substituted for them. His poetry, too, is of the highest order; his lyrics of the purest, lightest fancy; his masques rich with gorgeous pictures; his pastoral, the "Sad Shepherd," fragment as it is, breathes a delicate tenderness. But, in spite of the beauty and strength which lingered on, the life of

1593

our drama was fast ebbing away. The interest of the people was in reality being drawn to newer and graver themes, as the struggle of the Great Rebellion threw its shadow before it, and the efforts of the playwrights to arrest this tendency of the time by fresh excitement only brought about the ruin of the stage. The grossness of the later comedy is incredible. Almost as incredible is the taste of the later tragedians for horrors of incest and blood. The hatred of the Puritans to the stage was not a mere longing to avenge the taunts and insults which the stage had levelled at Puritanism; it was in the main the honest hatred of God-fearing men against the foulest depravity presented in a poetic and attractive form.

Section VIII.—The Conquest of Ireland, 1588—1610

[*Authorities.*—The chief authority for the early history of Ireland is the "Annals of the Four Masters" (edited O'Donovan), a seventeenth-century compilation based on older sources. For the conquest by Henry II., Giraldus Cambrensis, "Expugnatio Hibernica," and the "Song of Dermot" (edited Orpen). For the Tudor period, the "Calendar of Irish State Papers"; the "Annals of Loch Cé"; Spenser's "View of the State of Ireland"; and Fynes Moryson, "Itinerary." The chief modern history is Bagwell, "Ireland under the Tudors."]

The War with Spain

While England became "a nest of singing birds" at home, the last years of Elizabeth's reign were years of splendour and triumph abroad. With the defeat of the Armada began a series of victories which broke the power of Spain, and changed the political aspect of the world. The exhaustion of the Royal Treasury indeed soon forced Elizabeth to content herself with issuing commissions to volunteers, but the war was a national one, and the nation waged it
1589 for itself. In the year after the ruin of the Armada two hundred vessels and twenty thousand volunteers gathered at their own cost at Plymouth, under the command of Drake and Norris, plundered Corunna, and insulted the Spanish coast. A new buccaneering expedition, which made its way to the West Indies under Drake, captured the Spanish galleons, and levied contributions on the rich
1596 merchant-cities of the colonies. Philip was roused by the insult to new dreams of invasion, but his threat of a fresh Armada was met by a daring descent of the English forces upon Cadiz. The town was plundered and burnt to the ground; thirteen vessels of war were fired in its harbour, and the stores accumulated for the expedition utterly destroyed. In spite of this crushing blow a
1597 Spanish fleet gathered in the following year and set sail for the English coast; but as in the case of its predecessor, storms proved more fatal than the English guns, and the ships were wrecked and almost destroyed in the Bay of Biscay. From this moment it was through France, rather than by a direct attack, that Philip hoped to reach England. The Armada had hardly been dispersed, when the assassination of Henry the Third, the last of the line of Valois,

raised Henry of Navarre to the throne; and the accession of a Protestant sovereign at once ranged the Catholics of France to a man on the side of the League and its leaders, the Guises. The League rejected Henry's claims as those of a heretic, admitted the ridiculous pretensions which Philip advanced to the vacant throne, and received the support of Spanish soldiery and Spanish treasure. This new effort of Spain, an effort whose triumph must have ended in her ruin, forced Elizabeth to aid Henry with men and money in his seven years' struggle against the overwhelming odds which seemed arrayed against him; but valuable as was her support, it was by the King's amazing courage and energy that victory was at last wrested from his foes. In spite of religious passion, the national spirit of France revolted more and more from the rule of Spain, and the King's submission to the faith held by the bulk of his subjects at last destroyed all chance of Philip's success. "Paris is well worth a mass" was the famous phrase in which Henry explained his abandonment of the Protestant cause, but the step did more than secure Paris. It at once dashed to the ground all hopes of further resistance, it dissolved the League, and enabled the King at the head of a reunited people to force Philip to acknowledge his title and to consent to peace in the Treaty of Vervins. 1588 to 1610

With the ruin of Philip's projects in France and the assertion of English supremacy at sea, all danger from Spain passed quietly away, and Elizabeth was able to direct her undivided energies to the last work which illustrates her reign. 1597

To understand however the final conquest of Ireland, we must retrace our steps to the reign of Henry the Second. The civilization of the island had at that time fallen far below the height which it had reached when its missionaries brought religion and learning to the shores of Northumbria. Learning had almost disappeared. The Christianity which had been a vital force in the eighth century had died into asceticism and superstition in the twelfth, and had ceased to influence the morality of the people at large. The Church, destitute of any effective organization, was powerless to do the work which it had done elsewhere in Western Europe, or to introduce order into the anarchy of warring tribes. On the contrary, it shared the anarchy around it. Its head, the Coarb, or Archbishop of Armagh, sank into the hereditary chieftain of a clan; its bishops were without dioceses, and often mere dependants of the greater monasteries. Hardly a trace of any central authority remained to knit the tribes into a single nation, though the King of Ulster claimed supremacy over his fellow-kings of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught; and even within these minor kingships the regal authority was little more than a name. The one living thing in the social and political chaos was the sept, or tribe, or clan, whose institutions remained those of the earliest stage of human civilization. Its chieftainship was hereditary, but, instead of passing from father to son, it was held by whoever was the eldest member of the ruling family at the time. The land belonging to the tribe was Ireland

1588 to 1610

shared among its members, but re-divided among them at certain intervals of years. The practice of "fosterage," or adoption, bound the adopted child more closely to its foster-parents than to its family by blood. Whatever elements of improvement or progress had been introduced into the island at an earlier time disappeared in the long and destructive struggle with the Danes. The coast-towns, such as Dublin or Waterford, which the invaders founded, remained Danish in blood and manners, and at feud with the Celtic tribes around them, though sometimes forced by the fortunes of war to pay tribute, and to accept, in name at least, the overlordship of the Irish Kings. It was through these towns however that the intercourse with England, which had practically ceased since the eighth century, was to some extent renewed. Cut off from the native Church of the island by national antipathy, the Danish coast-cities applied to the See of Canterbury for the ordination of their bishops, and acknowledged a right of spiritual supervision in Lanfranc and Anselm. The relations thus formed were drawn closer by the slave-trade, which the Conqueror and Bishop Wulfstan succeeded for a time in suppressing at Bristol, but which appears to have quickly revived. At the time of Henry the Second's accession Ireland was full of Englishmen, who had been kidnapped and sold into slavery, in spite of Royal prohibitions and the spiritual menaces of the English Church. The slave-trade afforded a legitimate pretext for war, had a pretext been needed by the ambition of Henry the Second; and within a few months of that King's coronation John of Salisbury was despatched to obtain the Papal sanction for his invasion of the island. The enterprise, as it was laid before Pope Hadrian IV., took the colour of a crusade. The isolation of Ireland from the general body of Christendom, the absence of learning and civilization, the scandalous vices of its people, were alleged as the grounds of Henry's action. It was the general belief of the time that all islands fell under the jurisdiction of the Papal See, and it was as a possession of the Roman Church that Henry sought Hadrian's permission to enter Ireland. His aim was "to enlarge the bounds of the Church, to restrain the progress of vices, to correct the manners of its people and to plant virtue among them, and to increase the Christian religion." He engaged to "subject the people to laws, to extirpate vicious customs, to respect the rights of the native Churches, and to enforce the payment of Peter's pence" as a recognition of the overlordship of the Roman See. Hadrian by his bull approved the enterprise as one prompted by "the ardour of faith and love of religion," and declared his will that the people of Ireland should receive Henry with all honour, and revere him as their lord. The Papal bull was produced in a great council of the English baronage, but the opposition was strong enough to force on Henry a temporary abandonment of his schemes, and his energies were diverted for the moment to plans of continental aggrandizement.

Fourteen years had passed when an Irish chieftain, Dermot,

King of Leinster, presented himself at Henry's Court, and did homage to him for the dominions from which he had been driven in one of the endless civil wars which distracted the island. Dermot returned to Ireland with promises of aid from the English knighthood; and was soon followed by Robert FitzStephen, a son of the Constable of Cardigan, with a small band of a hundred and forty knights, sixty men-at-arms, and three or four hundred Welsh archers. Small as was the number of the adventurers, their horses and arms proved irresistible to the Irish kernes; a sally of the men of Wexford was avenged by the storm of their town; the Ossory clans were defeated with a terrible slaughter, and Dermot, seizing a head from the heap of trophies which his men piled at his feet, tore off in savage triumph its nose and lips with his teeth. The arrival of fresh forces heralded the coming of Richard of Clare, Earl of Pembroke and Striguil, a ruined baron who bore the nickname of Strongbow, and who in defiance of Henry's prohibition landed with a force of fifteen hundred men, as Dermot's mercenary, near Waterford. The city was at once stormed, and the united forces of the Earl and King marched to the siege of Dublin. In spite of a relief attempted by the King of Connaught, who was recognized as overking of the island by the rest of the tribes, Dublin was taken by surprise; and the marriage of Earl Richard with Eva, Dermot's daughter, left him on the death of his father-in-law, which followed quickly on these successes, master of his kingdom of Leinster. The new lord had soon, however, to hurry back to England, and appease the jealousy of Henry by the surrender of Dublin to the Crown, by doing homage for Leinster as an English lordship, and by accompanying the King in his voyage to the new dominion which the adventurers had won. Had Henry been allowed by fortune to carry out his purpose, the conquest of Ireland would now have been accomplished. The King of Connaught indeed and the chiefs of Ulster refused him homage, but the rest of the Irish tribes owned his suzerainty; the bishops in synod at Cashel recognized him as their lord; and he was preparing to penetrate to the north and west, and to secure his conquest by a systematic erection of castles throughout the country, when the troubles which followed on the murder of Archbishop Thomas recalled him hurriedly to Normandy. The lost opportunity never again arrived. Connaught, indeed, bowed to a nominal acknowledgment of Henry's overlordship; John De Courcy penetrated into Ulster and established himself at Downpatrick; and the King planned for a while the establishment of his youngest son, John, as Lord of Ireland. But the levity of the young prince, who mocked the rude dresses of the native chieftains, and plucked them in insult by the beard, compelled his recall; and nothing but the feuds and weakness of the Irish tribes enabled the adventurers to hold the districts of Drogheda, Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork, which formed what was known as the "English Pale."

1588 to 1610 — Strongbow

1169

Had the Irish driven their invaders into the sea, or the English

1588 to 1610 — The Barons of the Pale

succeeded in the complete conquest of Ireland, the misery of its after history might have been avoided. A struggle such as that of Scotland under Bruce might have produced a spirit of patriotism and national union, which would have formed a people out of the mass of warring clans. A conquest such as that of England by the Normans would have spread at any rate the law, the order, the peace, and civilization of the conquering country over the length and breadth of the conquered. Unhappily Ireland, while powerless to effect its deliverance, was strong enough to hold its assailants at bay. The country was broken into two halves, whose conflict has never ceased. The barbarism of the native tribes was only intensified by their hatred of the civilized intruders. The intruders themselves, penned up in the narrow limits of the Pale, fell rapidly to the level of the Irish barbarism. All the lawlessness, the ferocity, the narrowness of feudalism broke out unchecked in the horde of adventurers who held the land by their sword. It needed the stern vengeance of John, whose army stormed their strongholds, and drove the leading barons into exile, to preserve even their fealty

1210 to the English Crown. John divided the Pale into counties, and ordered the observance of the English law; but the departure of his army was the signal for a return of the anarchy which he had trampled under foot. Every Irishman without the Pale was deemed an enemy and a robber, nor was his murder cognizable by the law. Half the subsistence of the barons was drawn from their forays across the border, and these forays were avenged by incursions of native marauders, which carried havoc to the walls of Dublin. The English settlers in the Pale itself were harried and oppressed by enemy and protector alike; while the feuds of baron with baron wasted their strength, and prevented any effective combination against the Irish enemy. The landing of a Scotch force after Bannockburn with Edward Bruce at its head, and a general rising

1316 of the clans on its appearance, drove indeed the barons to a momentary union; and in the bloody field of Athenry their valour was proved by the slaughter of eleven thousand of their foes, and the almost complete extinction of the great sept of the O'Connors. But with victory returned anarchy and degradation. The barons sank more and more into Irish chieftains; the FitzMaurices, who became Earls of Desmond, and whose great territory in the south was erected into a County Palatine, adopted the dress and manners of the natives around them; and the provisions of the Statute of Kilkenny were fruitless to check the growth of this evil. The Statute forbade the adoption by any man of English blood of the Irish language or name or dress; it enforced the use of English law, and made that of the native or Brehon law, which had crept into the Pale, an act of treason; it made treasonable any marriage

1367 of the Englishry with persons of Irish blood, or any adoption of English children by Irish foster-fathers. The anxiety with which the English Government watched the degradation which its laws failed to avert stirred it at last to a serious effort for the conquest

and organization of the island. In one of the intervals of peace which chequered his stormy reign, Richard the Second landed with an army of overpowering strength, before the advance of which into the interior all notion of resistance was quickly abandoned. Seventy-five chiefs of clans did him homage; and the four over-kings of the island followed him to Dublin, and submitted to receive the order of Knighthood. The King devoted himself eagerly to the work of forming an effective government by the enforcement of the laws, the removal of tyrannical officers, and the conciliation of the native tribes; but the troubles in England soon interrupted his efforts, and all traces of his work vanished with the embarkation of his soldiers. 1538 to 1610

Ireland and the Tudors

With the renewal of the French wars, and the outburst of the Wars of the Roses, Ireland was again left to itself. The policy of Henry the Seventh threw power without stint into the hands of the nobles of the Pale. When the Earl of Kildare defied the authority of the Government, Henry made him Lord Deputy. "All Ireland cannot rule this man," complained the Council. "Then shall he rule all Ireland," replied the King. In the opening of his successor's reign English influence reached its lowest point of depression. The great Norman lords of the south, the Butlers and Geraldines, the De la Poers and the Fitzpatricks, though subjects in name, were in fact defiant of royal authority. In manners and outer seeming they had sunk into mere natives; their feuds were as incessant as those of the Irish septs; and their despotism over the miserable inhabitants of the Pale combined the horrors of feudal oppression with those of Celtic anarchy. Crushed by taxation, by oppression, by misgovernment, plundered alike by Celtic marauders and by the troops levied to disperse them, the wretched descendants of the first English settlers preferred even Irish misrule to English "order," and the border of the Pale retreated steadily towards Dublin. The towns of the seaboard, sheltered by their walls and their municipal self-government, formed the only exceptions to the general chaos; elsewhere throughout its dominions the English Government, though still strong enough to break down any open revolt, was a mere phantom of rule. From the Celtic tribes without the Pale even the remnant of civilization and of native union which had lingered on to the time of Strongbow had vanished away. The feuds of the Irish septs were as bitter as their hatred of the stranger; and the Government at Dublin found it easy to maintain a strife, which saved it the necessity of self-defence, among a people whose "nature is such that for money one shall have the son to war against his father, and the father against his child." During the first thirty years of the sixteenth century, the annals of the country which remained under native rule record more than a hundred raids and battles between clans of the north alone. But the time was at last come for a vigorous attempt on the part of England to introduce order into this chaos of turbulence and misrule. To Henry the Eighth the policy which had been pursued by his father was utterly

1588 to 1610 hateful. His purpose was to rule in Ireland as thoroughly and effectively as he ruled in England, and during the latter half of his reign he bent his whole energies to accomplish this aim. From the first hours of his accession, indeed, the Irish lords felt the heavier hand of a master; and the Geraldines, who had been suffered under the preceding reign to govern Ireland in the name of the Crown, were quick to discover that the Crown would no longer stoop to be their tool. They resolved to frighten England again into a conviction of its helplessness; and the rising of Lord Thomas Fitzgerald followed the usual fashion of Irish revolts. A murder of the Archbishop of Dublin, a capture of the city, a repulse before its castle, a harrying of the Pale, ended in a sudden disappearance of the rebels among the bogs and forests of the border on the advance of the English forces. It had been usual to meet such an onset as this by a raid of the same character, by a corresponding failure before the castle of the rebellious noble, and a retreat like his own, which served as a preliminary to negotiations and a compromise.

1535 Unluckily for the Geraldines, Henry had resolved to take Ireland seriously in hand, and he had Cromwell to execute his will. Skeffington, the new Lord Deputy, brought with him a train of artillery, which worked a startling change in the political aspect of the island. The castles which had hitherto sheltered rebellion were battered into ruins. Maynooth, the impregnable stronghold from which the Geraldines threatened Dublin, and ruled the Pale at their will, was beaten down in a fortnight. So crushing and unforeseen was the blow that resistance was at once at an end. Not only was the power of the great Norman house which had towered over Ireland utterly broken, but only a single boy was left to preserve its name.

Henry the Eighth With the fall of the Geraldines Ireland felt itself in a master's grasp. "Irishmen," wrote one of the Lord Justices to Cromwell, "were never in such fear as now. The King's sessions are being kept in five shires more than formerly." Not only were the Englishmen of the Pale at Henry's feet, but the kernes of Wicklow and Wexford sent in their submission; and for the first time in men's memory an English army appeared in Munster and reduced the south to obedience. The great castle of the O'Briens, which guarded the passage of the Shannon, was carried by assault, and its fall carried with it the submission of Clare. The capture of Athlone brought about the reduction of Connaught, and assured the loyalty of the great Norman house of the De Burghs or Bourkes, who had assumed an almost Royal authority in the west. The resistance of the tribes of the north was broken in the victory of Bellahoe. In

1535 to 1542 seven years, partly through the vigour of Skeffington's successor, Lord Leonard Grey, and still more through the resolute will of Henry and Cromwell, the power of the Crown, which had been limited to the walls of Dublin, was acknowledged over the length and breadth of Ireland. But submission was far from being all that Henry desired. His aim was to civilize the people whom he had

conquered—to rule not by force but by law. But the only conception of law which the King or his ministers could frame was that of English law. The customary law which prevailed without the Pale, the native system of clan government and common tenure of land by the tribe, as well as the poetry and literature which threw their lustre over the Irish tongue, were either unknown to the English statesmen, or despised by them as barbarous. The one mode of civilizing Ireland and redressing its chaotic misrule which presented itself to their minds, was that of destroying the whole Celtic tradition of the Irish people—that of "making Ireland English" in manners, in law, and in tongue. The Deputy, Parliament, Judges, Sheriffs, which already existed within the Pale, furnished a faint copy of English institutions; and these, it was hoped, might be gradually extended over the whole island. The English language and mode of life would follow, it was believed, the English law. The one effectual way of bringing about such a change as this lay in a complete conquest of the island, and in its colonization by English settlers; but from this course, pressed on him as it was by his own lieutenants and by the settlers of the Pale, even the iron will of Henry shrank. It was at once too bloody and too expensive. To win over the chiefs, to turn them by policy and a patient generosity into English nobles, to use the traditional devotion of their tribal dependents as a means of diffusing the new civilization of their chiefs, to trust to time and steady government for the gradual reformation of the country, was a policy safer, cheaper, more humane, and more statesmanlike. It was this system which, even before the fall of the Geraldines, Henry had resolved to adopt; and it was this which he pressed on Ireland when the conquest laid it at his feet. The chiefs were to be persuaded of the advantage of justice and legal rule. Their fear of any purpose to "expel them from their lands and dominions lawfully possessed" was to be dispelled by a promise "to conserve them as their own." Even their remonstrances against the introduction of English law were to be regarded, and the course of justice to be enforced or mitigated according to the circumstances of the country. In the resumption of lands or rights which clearly belonged to the Crown "sober ways, politic shifts, and amiable persuasions" were to be preferred to rigorous dealing. It was this system of conciliation which was in the main carried out by the English Government under Henry and his two successors. Chieftain after chieftain was won over to the acceptance of the indenture which guaranteed him in the possession of his lands, and left his authority over his tribesmen untouched, on conditions of a pledge of loyalty, of abstinence from illegal wars and exactions on his fellow-subjects, and of rendering a fixed tribute and service in war-time to the Crown. The sole test of loyalty demanded was the acceptance of an English title, and the education of a son at the English court; though in some cases, like that of the O'Neills, a promise was exacted to use the English language and dress, and to encourage tillage and

1533 to 1610

1583 to 1610

husbandry. Compliance with conditions such as these was procured not merely by the terror of the Royal name, but by heavy bribes. The chieftains in fact profited greatly by the change. Not only were the lands of the suppressed abbeys granted to them on their assumption of their new titles, but the English law-courts, ignoring the Irish custom by which the land belonged to the tribe at large, regarded the chiefs as sole proprietors of the soil.

The Reformation

The assumption by Henry of the title of King of Ireland, in the place of the older title of Lord, which followed naturally on his quarrel with the Papacy, was the fitting crown of the new system. The merits of the system were unquestionable; its faults were such as a statesman of that day could hardly be expected to perceive. The prohibition of the national dress, customs, laws, and language must have seemed to the Tudor politicians merely the suppression of a barbarism which stood in the way of all improvement; and the error of their attempt could only be felt, if felt at all, in the districts without the Pale. Their firm and conciliatory policy must in the end have won, but for the fatal blunder which plunged Ireland into religious strife at the moment when her civil strife seemed about to come to an end. Ever since Strongbow's landing there had been no one Irish Church, simply because there had been no one Irish nation. There was not the slightest difference in doctrine or discipline between the Church without the Pale and the Church within it. But within the Pale the clergy were exclusively of English blood and speech, and without it they were exclusively of Irish. Irishmen were shut out by law from abbeys and churches within the English boundary; and the ill-will of the natives shut out Englishmen from churches and abbeys outside it. As to the religious state of the country, it was much on a level with its political condition. Feuds and misrule had told fatally on ecclesiastical discipline. The bishops were political officers, or hard fighters like the chiefs around them; their sees were neglected, their cathedrals abandoned to decay. Through whole dioceses the churches lay in ruins and without priests. The only preaching done in the country was done by the begging friars, and the results of the friars' preaching were small. "If the King do not provide a remedy," it was said in 1525, "there will be no more Christentie than in the middle of Turkey." Unfortunately the remedy which Henry provided was worse than the disease. Politically Ireland was one with England, and the great revolution which was severing the one country from the Papacy extended itself naturally to the other. The results of it indeed at first seemed small enough. The Supremacy, a question which had convulsed England, passed over into Ireland to meet its only obstacle in a general indifference. Everybody was ready to accept it without a thought of its consequences. The bishops and clergy within the Pale bent to the King's will as easily as their fellows in England, and their example was followed by at least four prelates of dioceses without the Pale. The native chieftains made no more scruple than the Lords of the

Council in renouncing obedience to the Bishop of Rome, and in acknowledging Henry as the "Supreme Head of the Church of England and Ireland under Christ." There was none of the resistance to the dissolution of the abbeys which had been witnessed on the other side of the Channel, and the greedy chieftains showed themselves perfectly willing to share the plunder of the Church. But the results of the measure were fatal to the little culture and religion which even the past centuries of disorder had spared. Such as they were, the religious houses were the only schools which Ireland contained. The system of vicars, so general in England, was rare in Ireland; churches in the patronage of the abbeys were for the most part served by the religious themselves, and the dissolution of their houses suspended public worship over large districts of the country. The friars, hitherto the only preachers, and who continued to labour and teach in spite of the efforts of the Government, were thrown necessarily into a position of antagonism to the English rule. 1538 to 1610

Had the ecclesiastical changes which were forced on the country ended here, however, little harm would in the end have been done. But in England the breach with Rome, the destruction of the monastic orders, and the establishment of the Supremacy, had roused in the people itself a desire for theological change which Henry, however grudgingly, had little by little to satisfy. In Ireland the spirit of the Reformation never existed among the people at all. They accepted the legislative measures passed in the English Parliament without any dream of theological consequences, or of any change in the doctrine or ceremonies of the Church. Not a single voice demanded the abolition of pilgrimages, or the destruction of images, or the reform of public worship. The mission of Archbishop Browne "for the plucking down of idols and extinguishing of idolatry" was the first step in the long effort of the English Government to force a new faith on a people who to a man clung passionately to their old religion. Browne's attempts at "tuning the pulpits" were met by a sullen and significant opposition. "Neither by gentle exhortation," the Primate wrote to Cromwell, "nor by evangelical instruction, neither by oath of them solemnly taken, nor yet by threats of sharp correction may I persuade or induce any, whether religious or secular, since my coming over, once to preach the Word of God nor the just title of our illustrious Prince." Even the acceptance of the Supremacy, which had been so quietly effected, was brought into question when its results became clear. The bishops abstained from compliance with the order to erase the Pope's name out of their mass-books. The pulpits remained steadily silent. When Browne ordered the destruction of the images and relics in his own cathedral, he had to report that the prior and canons "find them so sweet for their gain that they heed not my words." Cromwell, however, was resolute for a religious uniformity between the two islands, and the Primate borrowed some of his patron's vigour. Recalcitrant priests were Protestantism in Ireland 1535

1588 to 1610 thrown into prison, images were plucked down from the roodloft, and the most venerable of Irish relics, the Staff of St. Patrick, was burnt in the market-place. But he found no support in his vigour, save from across the Channel. The Irish Council was cold. The Lord Deputy knelt to say prayers before the Rood at Tuam. A sullen, dogged opposition baffled his efforts, till the triumph of the old Catholic party at the close of Henry's reign forced him to a brief repose. With the accession of Edward the Sixth, however, the system of change was renewed with all the energy of Protestant zeal. The bishops were summoned before the Deputy, Sir Anthony St. Leger, to receive the new English Liturgy, which, though written in a tongue as strange to the native Irish as Latin itself, was now to supersede the Latin service-book in every diocese. The

1551 order was the signal for an open strife. "Now shall every illiterate fellow read Mass," burst forth Dowding, the Archbishop of Armagh, as he flung out of the chamber with all but one of his suffragans at his heels. Browne, on the other hand, was followed in his profession of obedience by the Bishops of Meath, Limerick, and Kildare. The Government, however, was far from quailing before the division of the episcopate. Dowding was driven from the country, and the vacant sees were filled with Protestants like Bale, of the most advanced type. But no change could be wrought by measures such as these on the opinions of the people themselves. The new episcopal reformers spoke no Irish, and of their English sermons not a word was understood by the rude kernes around the pulpit. The native priests remained silent. "As for preaching we have none," reports a zealous Protestant, "without which the ignorant can have no knowledge." The prelates who used the new prayer-book were simply regarded as heretics. The Bishop of Meath was assured by one of his flock that, "if the country wist how, they would eat you." Protestantism had failed to wrest a single Irishman from his older convictions, but it succeeded in uniting all Ireland against the Crown. The old political distinctions which had been produced by the conquest of Strongbow faded before the new struggle for a common faith. The population within the Pale and without it became one, "not as the Irish nation," it has been acutely said, "but as Catholics." A new sense of national identity was found in the identity of religion. "Both English and Irish begin to oppose your Lordship's orders," wrote Browne to Cromwell, "and to lay aside their national old quarrels."

Ireland and Mary With the accession of Mary the shadowy form of this earlier Irish Protestantism melted quietly away. There were no Protestants in Ireland save the new bishops; and when Bale had fled over the sea, and his fellow-prelates had been deprived, the Church resumed its old appearance. No attempt, indeed, was made to restore the monasteries; and Mary exercised her supremacy, deposed and appointed bishops, and repudiated Papal interference with her ecclesiastical acts, as vigorously as her father. But the Mass was restored, the old modes of religious worship were again held in

honour, and religious dissension between the Government and its Irish subjects was for the time at an end. With the close, however, of one danger came the rise of another. England was growing tired of the policy of conciliation which had been steadily pursued by Henry the Eighth and his successor. As yet it had been rewarded with precisely the sort of success which Wolsey had anticipated: the chiefs had come quietly in to the plan, and their septs had followed them in submission to the new order. "The winning of the Earl of Desmond was the winning of the rest of Munster with small charges. The making O'Brien an Earl made all that county obedient." The Macwilliam became Lord Clanrickard, and the Fitzpatricks Barons of Upper Ossory. The visit of the great northern chief, who had accepted the title of Earl of Tyrone, to the English Court was regarded as a marked step in the process of civilization. In the south, where the system of English law was slowly spreading, the chieftains sate on the bench side by side with the English justices of the peace; and something had been done to check the feuds and disorder of the wild tribes between Limerick and Tipperary. "Men may pass quietly throughout these countries without danger of robbery or other displeasure." In the Clanrickard county, once wasted with war, "ploughing increaseth daily." In Tyrone and the north, indeed, the old disorder reigned without a check; and everywhere the process of improvement tried the temper of the English Deputies by the slowness of its advance. The only hope of any real progress lay in patience; and there were signs that the Government at Dublin found it hard to wait. The "rough handling" of the chiefs by Sir Edward Bellingham, the Lord Deputy of the Protector Somerset, roused a spirit of revolt that only subsided when the poverty of the Exchequer forced him to withdraw the garrisons he had planted in the heart of the country. Lord Sussex made raid after raid to no purpose on the obstinate tribes of the north, burning in one the Cathedral of Armagh and three other churches. A far more serious breach in the system of conciliation was made when the project of English colonization which Henry had steadily rejected was adopted by the same Lord Deputy. The country of the O'Connors, which was assigned to English settlers, was made shire-land under the names of King's and Queen's County, in honour of Philip and Mary; and a savage warfare began at once between the planters and the dispossessed septs, which only ended in the following reign in the extermination of the Irishmen. Commissioners were appointed to survey waste lands, with the aim of carrying the work of colonization into other districts, when the accession of Elizabeth and the caution of Cecil checked further efforts in this direction, and resumed the safer though more tedious policy of Henry the Eighth.

1588 to 1610

The alarm however at English aggression had already spread among the natives; and its result was seen in a revolt of the north, and in the rise of a leader far more vigorous and able than any with whom the Government had had as yet to contend. The acceptance

Ireland and Elizabeth

1588 to 1610 of the Earldom of Tyrone by the chief of the O'Neills brought about the inevitable conflict between the system of succession recognized by English and that recognized by Irish law. On the death of the Earl, England acknowledged his eldest son as the heir of his Earldom; while the sept maintained their older right of choosing a chief from among the members of the family, and preferred a younger son of less doubtful legitimacy. Sussex marched northward to settle the question by force of arms; but ere he could reach Ulster the activity of Shane O'Neill had quelled the disaffection of his rivals, the O'Donnells of Donegal, and won over the Scots of Antrim. "Never before," wrote Sussex, "durst Scot or Irishman look Englishman in the face in plain or wood since I came here;" but Shane had fired his men with a new courage, and charging the Deputy's army with a force hardly half its number, drove it back in rout on Armagh. A promise of pardon induced him to visit London, and make an illusory submission, but he was no sooner safe home again than its terms were set aside; and after a wearisome struggle, in which Shane foiled the efforts of the Lord Deputy to entrap or to poison him, he remained virtually master of the north. His success stirred larger dreams of ambition; he invaded Connaught, and pressed Clanrickard hard; while he replied to the remonstrances of the Council at Dublin with a wild defiance. "By the sword I have won these lands," he answered, "and by the sword will I keep them." But defiance broke idly against the skill and vigour of Sir Henry Sidney, who succeeded Sussex as Lord Deputy. The rival septs of the north were drawn into a rising against O'Neill, while the English army advanced from the Pale; and Shane, defeated by the O'Donnells, took refuge in Antrim, and was hewn to pieces in a drunken squabble by his
1567 Scottish entertainers. The victory of Sidney won ten years of peace for the wretched country; but Ireland had already been fixed on by the Catholic powers of the Continent as the ground on which they could with most advantage fight out their quarrel with Elizabeth. Practically indeed the religious question hardly existed there. The religious policy of the Protectorate had indeed been resumed on the Queen's accession; Rome was again renounced, the new Act of Uniformity forced the English prayer-book on the island, and compelled attendance at the services in which it was used. There was as before a general air of compliance with the law; even in the districts without the Pale the bishops generally conformed, and the only exceptions of which we have any information were to be found in the extreme south and in the north, where resistance was distant enough to be safe. But the real cause of
1561 this apparent submission to the Act lay in the fact that it remained, and necessarily remained, a dead letter. It was impossible to find any considerable number of English ministers, or of Irish priests acquainted with English. Meath was one of the most civilized dioceses, and out of a hundred curates in it hardly ten knew any tongue save their own. The promise that the service-book should

be translated into Irish was never fulfilled, and the final clause of the Act itself authorized the use of a Latin rendering of it till further order could be taken. But this, like its other provisions, was ignored, and throughout Elizabeth's reign the gentry of the Pale went unquestioned to Mass. There was in fact no religious persecution, and in the many complaints of Shane O'Neill we find no mention of a religious grievance. But this was far from being the view of Rome or of Spain, of the Jesuit missionaries, or of the Irish exiles abroad. They represented, and perhaps believed, the Irish people to be writhing under a religious oppression which they were burning to shake off. They saw in the Irish loyalty to Catholicism a lever for overthrowing the great heretic Queen. Stukely, an Irish refugee, pressed on the Pope and Spain the policy of a descent on Ireland; and his pressure brought about at last the landing of a small Spanish force on the shores of Kerry. In spite however of the arrival of a Papal Legate with the blessing of the Holy See, the attempt ended in a miserable failure. The fort of Smerwick, in which the invaders entrenched themselves, was forced to surrender, and its garrison put ruthlessly to the sword. The Earl of Desmond, who after long indecision rose to support them, was defeated and hunted over his own country, which the panic-born cruelty of his pursuers harried into a wilderness. Pitiless as it was, the work done in Munster spread a terror over the land which served England in good stead when the struggle with Catholicism culminated in the fight with the Armada; and not a chieftain stirred during that memorable year save to massacre the miserable men who were shipwrecked along the coast of Bantry or Sligo.

1588 to 1610

1579

The power of the Government was from this moment recognized everywhere throughout the land. But it was a power founded solely on terror; and the outrages and exactions of the soldiery, who had been flushed with rapine and bloodshed in the south, sowed during the years which followed its reduction the seeds of a revolt more formidable than any which Elizabeth had yet encountered. The tribes of Ulster, divided by the policy of Sidney, were again united by the common hatred of their oppressors; and in Hugh O'Neill they found a leader of even greater ability than Shane himself. Hugh had been brought up at the English court, and was in manners and bearing an Englishman; he had been rewarded for his steady loyalty in previous contests by a grant of the Earldom of Tyrone; and had secured aid from the Government, in his contest with a rival chieftain of his clan, by an offer to introduce the English laws and shire-system into his new country. But he was no sooner undisputed master of the north than his tone gradually changed. Whether from a long-formed plan, or from suspicion of English designs upon himself, he at last took a position of open defiance. It was at the moment when the Treaty of Vervins, and the wreck of the second Armada, freed Elizabeth's hands from the struggle with Spain, that the revolt of the great

Conquest and Settlement

1588 to 1610 — 1598 northern tribe of the O'Neill broke the quiet which had prevailed since the victories of Lord Grey, and forced the Irish question again on the Queen's attention. The tide of her recent triumphs seemed at first to have turned. A defeat of the English forces in Tyrone brought a general rising of the northern tribes; and a great effort made in the following year for the suppression of the growing revolt failed through the vanity and disobedience of the Queen's Lieutenant, the young Earl of Essex, a favourite who recompensed her indulgence on his recall by a puerile sedition which brought 1599 him to the block. His successor, Lord Mountjoy, found himself master on his arrival of only a few miles round Dublin; but in three years the revolt was at an end. A Spanish force which landed 1601 to 1603 to support it at Kinsale was driven to surrender; a line of forts secured the country as the English mastered it; all open opposition was crushed out by the energy and the ruthlessness of the new Lieutenant; and a famine which followed on his ravages completed the devastating work of the sword. Hugh O'Neill was brought in triumph to Dublin; the Earl of Desmond, who had again roused Munster into revolt, fled for refuge to Spain; and the work of conquest was at last brought to a close. Under the administration of Mountjoy's successor, Sir Arthur Chichester, an able and determined effort was made for the settlement of the conquered province by the general introduction of a purely English 1605 to 1608 system of government, justice, and property. Every vestige of the old Celtic constitution of the country was rejected as "barbarous." The tribal authority of the chiefs was taken from them by law. They were reduced to the position of great nobles and landowners, while their tribesmen rose from subjects into tenants, owing only fixed and customary dues and services to their lords. The tribal system of property in common was set aside, and the communal holdings of the tribesmen turned into the copyholds of English law. In the same way the chieftains were stripped of their hereditary jurisdiction, and the English system of judges and trial by jury substituted for their proceedings under Brehon or customary law. To all this the Celts opposed the tenacious obstinacy of their race. Irish juries, then as now, refused to convict. Glad as the tribesmen were to be freed from the arbitrary exactions of their chiefs, they held them for chieftains still. The attempt made by Chichester, under pressure from England, to introduce the English uniformity of religion ended in utter failure; for the Englishry of the Pale remained as Catholic as the native Irishry, and the sole result of the measure was to build up a new Irish people out of both on the common basis of religion. Much, however, had been done by the firm yet moderate government of the Lieutenant, and signs were already appearing of a disposition on the part of the people to conform gradually to the new usages when the English Council under Elizabeth's successor suddenly resolved upon and carried through the great revolutionary measure which is known as the Colonization of Ulster. The pacific and

conservative policy of Chichester was abandoned for a vast policy of spoliation; two-thirds of the north of Ireland was declared to have been confiscated to the Crown by the part its possessors had taken in a recent effort at revolt; and the lands which were thus gained were allotted to new settlers of Scotch and English extraction. In its material results the Plantation of Ulster was undoubtedly a brilliant success. Farms and homesteads, churches and mills rose fast amidst the desolate wilds of Tyrone. The Corporation of London undertook the colonization of Derry, and gave to the little town the name which its heroic defence has made so famous. The foundations of the economic prosperity which has raised Ulster high above the rest of Ireland in wealth and intelligence were undoubtedly laid in the confiscation of 1610: nor did the measure meet with any opposition at the time save that of secret discontent. The evicted natives withdrew sullenly to the lands which had been left them by the spoiler; but all faith in English justice had been torn from the minds of the Irishry, and the seed had been sown of that fatal harvest of distrust and disaffection, which was to be reaped through tyranny and massacre in the age to come. 1588 to 1610 — 1610

The colonization of Ulster has carried us beyond the limits of our present story. The triumph of Mountjoy flung its lustre over the last days of Elizabeth, but no outer triumph could break the gloom which gathered round the dying Queen. Lonely as she had always been, her loneliness deepened as she drew towards the grave. The statesmen and warriors of her earlier days had dropped one by one from her Council-board; and their successors were watching her last moments, and intriguing for favour in the coming reign. The old splendour of her Court waned and disappeared. Only officials remained about her, "the other of the Council and nobility estrange themselves by all occasions." As she passed along in her progresses, the people whose applause she courted remained cold and silent. The temper of the age, in fact, was changing, and isolating her as it changed. Her own England, the England which had grown up around her, serious, moral, prosaic, shrank coldly from this child of earth and the Renascence, brilliant, fanciful, unscrupulous, irreligious. She had enjoyed life as the men of her day enjoyed it, and now that they were gone she clung to it with a fierce tenacity. She hunted, she danced, she jested with her young favourites, she coquetted and scolded and frolicked at sixty-seven as she had done at thirty. "The Queen," wrote a courtier a few months before her death, "was never so gallant these many years, nor so set upon jollity." She persisted, in spite of opposition, in her gorgeous progresses from country-house to country-house. She clung to business as of old, and rated in her usual fashion "one who minded not to giving up some matter of account." But death crept on. Her face became haggard, and her frame shrank almost to a skeleton. At last her taste for finery disappeared, and she refused to change her dresses for a week together. A strange

The Death of Elizabeth

1588 to 1610

melancholy settled down on her: "she held in her hand," says one who saw her in her last days, "a golden cup, which she often put to her lips: but in truth her heart seemed too full to need more filling." Gradually her mind gave way. She lost her memory, the violence of her temper became unbearable, her very courage seemed to forsake her. She called for a sword to lie constantly beside her, and thrust it from time to time through the arras, as if she heard murderers stirring there. Food and rest became alike distasteful. She sate day and night propped up with pillows on a stool, her finger on her lip, her eyes fixed on the floor, without a word. If she once broke the silence, it was with a flash of her old queenliness. Cecil asserted that she "must" go to bed, and the word roused her like a trumpet. "Must!" she exclaimed; "is *must* a word to be addressed to princes? Little man, little man! thy father, if he had been alive, durst not have used that word." Then, as her anger spent itself, she sank into her old dejection. "Thou art so presumptuous," she said, "because thou knowest I shall die." She rallied once more when the ministers beside her bed named Lord Beauchamp, the heir to the Suffolk claim, as a possible successor. "I will have no rogue's son," she cried hoarsely, "in my seat." But she gave no sign, save a motion of the head, at the mention of the King of Scots. She was in fact fast becoming insensible; and early the next morning the life of Elizabeth, a life so great, so strange and lonely in its greatness, passed quietly away.

PRINTED BY
THE TEMPLE PRESS AT LETCHWORTH
IN GREAT BRITAIN

Thomas Wolsey.

p. 294 His foreign policy

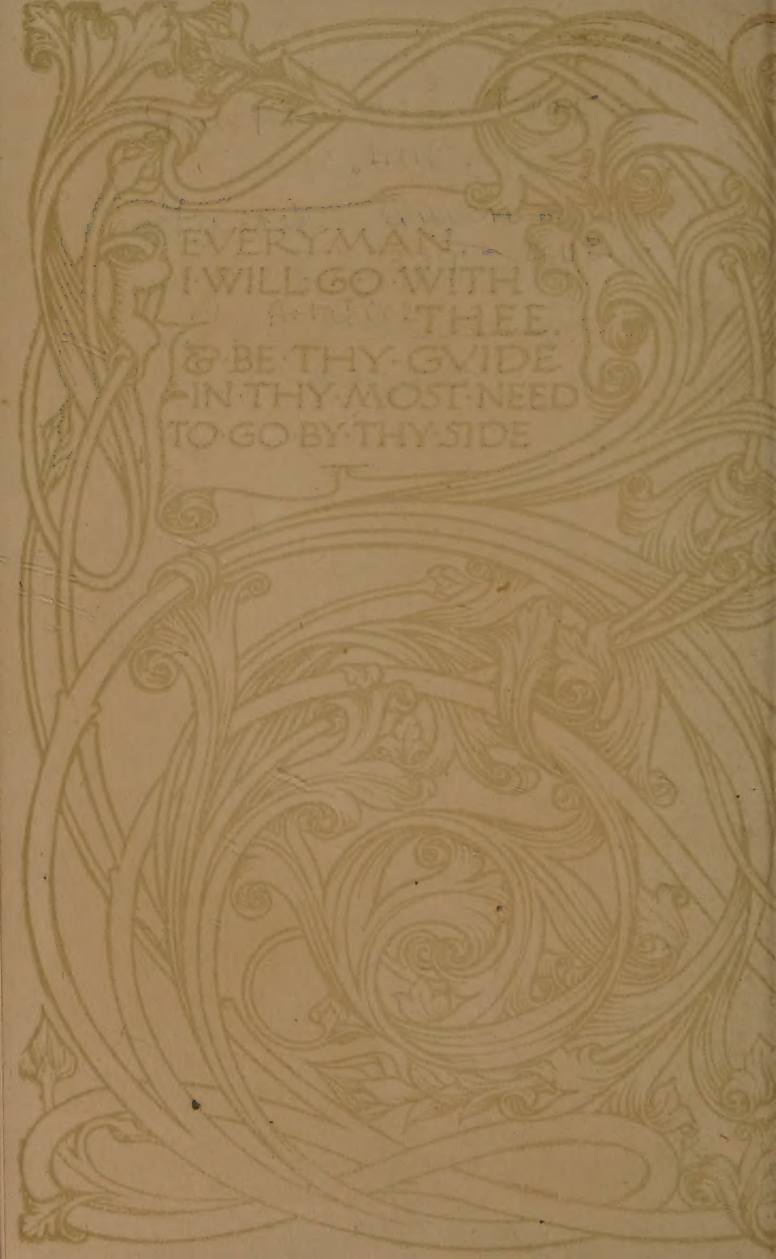
305 His rise into power.

306-7. His home policy

309-8 Relations with Parl^t

310-11 About Kings divorce

312. . His fall


EVERYMAN
I WILL GO WITH
THEE.
& BE THY GVIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE